

NGO MONITOR

# Annual Report

# 2007

NGO MONITOR

Promoting Critical Debate and  
Accountability of Human Rights  
NGOs in the Arab Israeli Conflict



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# MISSION STATEMENT

The community of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has become extremely powerful and influential, as seen in their influence regarding human rights claims in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. NGO reports, protests and lobbying activities have had a significant impact, particularly on the media, academia and the United Nations, as well as on the policies adopted by many governments worldwide. The NGO Forum at the 2001 Durban conference, which adopted the strategy of demonization of Israel, is indicative of this power.

Until recently, however, these NGOs, supported by individual donors, philanthropic institutions and government budgets, have not themselves been subject to independent, critical evaluation. NGO Monitor, therefore, aims to fill this void by promoting accountability and debate on the publications and activities of political NGOs in the framework of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

NGOs vary widely, not only in nature and scope, but also in their agendas and apparent motives. Their power to provide humanitarian assistance is matched by their ability to misrepresent and fuel conflict. Unlike democratically elected governments or publicly traded companies, no systematic framework or criteria exist for holding NGOs accountable for the statements and reports they produce. In some circumstances, established NGOs that claim to pursue universal humanitarian standards enjoy a “halo effect,” granting them immunity from detailed scrutiny or criticism. In other cases, the assumption that their motives are politically and ideologically neutral inhibits critical review.

The vast resources at the disposal of these self-proclaimed humanitarian and human rights NGOs enable them to produce an immense volume of reports, press releases and media interviews, establishing them as primary sources for journalists, researchers and policy makers. These pronouncements have often framed public discourse and strongly influenced policy.

As NGO Monitor has documented, in many cases, NGO reports and campaigns stand in sharp contradiction to their claim to uphold universal human rights. Selective morality, as demonstrated by obscuring or erasing context, as well as reporting claims from unverifiable or biased sources, have contributed to gross moral distortions in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

NGO Monitor aims to provide information and analysis, in order to foster a comprehensive debate on these critical issues.

# LETTER FROM PROF. GERALD STEINBERG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As NGO Monitor completes its fifth year of operation, we can point to some significant achievements in holding NGOs accountable, as well as many formidable challenges before us. We are still the only framework in the world that systematically analyzes the activities of political NGOs, and have gradually extended both the extent of our reporting and the interaction with the NGO community. Coverage in the *Economist* and other major media, our contacts with major funding organizations (contributing to the Canadian government's decision to cut support for radical NGOs), changes in the agendas of some other NGOs in response to our analyses, and other details discussed in this report all testify to the growing impact of NGO Monitor.

Reflecting these developments, in 2007 NGO Monitor was accredited as a non-profit organization (amutah) under Israeli law and is in the process of expanding its activities to the United States. While these changes facilitate the growth of NGO Monitor, our publications and activities continue to have a major impact on increasing NGO accountability. Our research and analyses stimulate debate among government officials, diplomats and academics, as well as in the printed and recorded media, and blogosphere. Through our monthly digests, summarizing NGO developments, and in-depth weekly analyses of the activities and publications of the most influential organizations (reaching close to 11,000 subscribers), we have become an important source for those seeking accurate information on NGOs.

NGO Monitor flourished in 2007, with the addition of new, more specialized positions. Dan Kosky was appointed Communications Director, while Daniel Fink serves as Deputy Director of Government Affairs. Dr. Andre Oboler joined us as Legacy Heritage Fellow, specializing in technology. Sarah Mandel has continued as our Associate Editor, and Anne Herzberg as our Legal Advisor and Research Coordinator.

Over the past year, our work has taken on new dimensions. In anticipation of the Durban Review Conference scheduled to take place in April 2009, we have examined the positions of NGOs and governments in relation to this event. We have also begun publishing a series of monographs focusing on issues at the core of the political dimensions of the NGO and human rights discourse, such as European Union funding of politicized NGOs, and the exploitation of international law in order to prosecute Israeli officials.

In 2007, the echoes of the Second Lebanon War continued to be played out in the NGO network, in addition to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Six Day War and renewed IDF operations in the Gaza Strip (following Hamas' violent takeover and continued rocket attacks on Israeli civilians). In each of these areas, prominent NGOs published numerous statements and reports condemning Israel. NGO Monitor has exposed the factual inaccuracies, manipulation of the human rights discourse and the political agenda inherent in these campaigns.

NGO Monitor's work has also gained greater exposure both in the local and international

media. Our research has been cited in prestigious publications including *The Economist*, *The Guardian* and *The International Herald Tribune*. NGO Monitor material has also been presented to the Irish government by the Israeli Ambassador and submitted as evidence to the Winograd Commission on the Second Lebanon War, and the Seventieth Session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, among others. A segment on NGO Monitor was screened on prime-time Israeli television, highlighting our impact on NGO and government officials.

In December 2007, NGO Monitor held its second annual conference in Jerusalem. Entitled "*Preparing for Durban II: NGOs, Public Opinion and the Exploitation of Human Rights*," it was attended by diplomats, academics, journalists and members of the NGO community. A lively discussion was sparked by the participation of Rabbis for Human Rights Executive Director, Arik Asherman, and Jan Van T'Land, Head of Jerusalem Mission, Medecins Sans Frontières, although a number of other NGOs declined invitations to appear.

This annual report is a summary of our accomplishments in 2007, highlighting the impact of our activities and publications on various NGOs and NGO funders.

We thank our donors for their generous and ongoing support, which empowers us to continue to challenge NGO campaigns and distortions, with the aim of strengthening the universal application of human rights.

# 1. ENGAGING WITH NGO OFFICIALS AND DONORS

NGO Monitor's reports continue to stimulate critical analysis of NGO activity, while promoting accountability and transparency. In 2007, this impact increased, as shown in numerous events and incidents involving NGO officials and donors.

For example, in May 2007, Amnon Vidan, Director-General of Amnesty International's Israel branch, responded to NGO Monitor's demonstration of his NGO's one-sided condemnation of Israel. In answering a journalist's question on this issue, he claimed that Amnesty International "expected Israel and other democratic states to abide by a higher standard of respect for human rights than non-democratic regimes" and that "Amnesty's treatment of different crises is based on different parameters, such as our ability to influence, and need to present issues to media."<sup>1</sup> In this way, Vidan acknowledged the impact of NGO Monitor's reports on Amnesty's disproportionate focus on Israel, and admitted that Amnesty violates the principle of universality in human rights.

Similarly, the impact of NGO Monitor was demonstrated in September 2007, when Human Rights Watch Executive Director, Ken Roth, visited Israel in order to publicize the 249-page report, entitled *Why They Died: Civilian Casualties in Lebanon during the 2006 War*.<sup>2</sup> This major report, which was published more than one year after the

war ended, reflected Roth's response to the detailed critiques led by NGO Monitor regarding the bias and credibility in HRW's publications. In both the report and his public comments, Roth acknowledged the impact of NGO Monitor's research.

As part of the effort to address the political bias in NGO activities and agendas, NGO Monitor increased contact with major funders, such as the Ford Foundation, the New Israel Fund, and European government officials to highlight problematic activity by recipient NGOs. In response to NGO Monitor reports, concerned British citizens approached the UK Charities Commission to investigate the politicized activities of War on Want, which campaigns "against the root causes of global poverty, inequality and injustice,"<sup>3</sup> placing great emphasis on Palestinian victimization, while ignoring Palestinian terrorism and endorsing boycotts, sanctions and divestment campaigns aimed at Israel. In 2007, NGO Monitor further scrutinized NGO donors through detailed reports on French and Irish government funding, and entering into dialogues on these issues with the officials.

In October 2007, NGO Monitor analyzed the New Israel Fund's (NIF) continuing support of politicized NGOs. A public debate ensued, focusing on NIF's questionable funding policies and radical grantees.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, some donors withdrew donations to NIF, and one designated that sum to NGO Monitor instead.

**THE JERUSALEM POST**  
25 YEARS OF JOURNALISM

**"Guess Who Europe's  
Subsidizing?"  
*Jerusalem Post*,  
Manfred Gerstenfeld,  
October 30, 2007**

"This story is the tip of a European iceberg of financial support for anti-Israeli bodies. *NGO Monitor* has exposed various state agencies which finance extreme anti-Israeli organizations. In an article in the Swiss daily *Le Temps*, Gerald Steinberg, who heads *NGO Monitor* cited examples of such support by the Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation.

...[T]he *Jewish Chronicle* wrote that Israeli diplomats intended to raise claims with the Irish government that its Irish Aid Department was financing anti-Israeli NGOs some of which promote the demonization of Israel and boycott actions. The Swedish International Development Agency is also involved in financing extreme anti-Israeli groups."



### B'Tselem

- B'Tselem declined the invitation to appear at NGO Monitor's 2007 conference, but Jessica Montel debated Gerald Steinberg in another venue, and acknowledged awareness of NGO Monitor's analyses.
- B'Tselem's Annual Report for 2007<sup>i</sup> reflected this NGO's dubious methodology, its misuse of international legal terms, and selective reporting in order to promote a political agenda. Many of the factual allegations were anecdotal and unverifiable, based on inconsistent methodology, contradictory claims, and intra-Palestinian violence was given very limited attention. However, B'Tselem increased its condemnation of suicide bombings and

rocket attacks targeting Israeli civilians, calling these actions "war crimes" and "a grave breach of the right to life", according to international humanitarian law.<sup>ii</sup>

- B'Tselem's summer 2007 booklet *The Gaza Strip - One Big Prison*<sup>iii</sup> portrayed Israel as an aggressor and occupier with full control of the Gaza Strip. While the report did include some context and acknowledged Israel's security concerns, its selective portrayal of facts, disproportionate focus on Israeli actions and use of powerful, one-sided photographs, demonstrated its dedication to ideological campaigning, over accuracy.<sup>iv</sup>
- On May 6, 2007, B'Tselem, together with HaMoked, released a lengthy report, *Absolute Prohibition: The Torture and Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Detainees*, claiming that the Israel Security Agency continues to torture detainees in violation of a 1999 High Court ruling.<sup>v</sup> In response, the Israeli

Ministry of Justice (MOJ) issued a nine-page letter detailing the questionable methodology and lack of verifiable sources.<sup>vi</sup>

- In a July 18, 2007 interview, B'Tselem's Executive Director Jessica Montell acknowledged that Israel is held to a higher standard within the international community and "in some ways Israel is discriminated against and disproportionately criticized." But she also stated, "Israel is a democracy that holds itself to a higher standard. And I think that's appropriate," a comment which denies the universality of human rights.<sup>vii</sup>
- Condemnations of Palestinian suicide attacks in 2007 and the fatal rocket bombardment from Gaza suggest that NGO Monitor's criticism of B'tselem's one-sided agenda and distortion of universal human rights is beginning to have an impact.

**1a. CANADIAN GOVERNMENT REDUCES FUNDING FOR RADICAL NGOs**

In the wake of NGO Monitor publications, which were repeated and amplified in the media and by other organizations, the Canadian government reduced or ended funding for a number of radical NGOs, including BADIL, a major supporter of Palestinian political campaigns promoting a “right of return.” Much of this funding was provided in the form of “humanitarian assistance” through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Although this is an important policy change, it is also incomplete, and a number of NGOs active in intense pro-Palestinian political activity, continue to benefit from CIDA funds.



For example, with half of its funding in 2007 from the Canadian International Development Agency, Montreal-based *Alternatives* continued to support clear anti-Israel political activity, in contrast to its proclaimed focus on civil, political, economic, social and human rights. Through media statements and cooperation with groups, such as the PNGO, Alternative Information Center, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC), BADIL (which no longer receives CIDA funding) and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), *Alternatives* demonizes Israel and contributes to the conflict, necessitating greater scrutiny by the Canadian government.

*Alternatives* provides financial support to politicized NGOs, as well as publishes statements on its website that demonize Israel, exploit international legal and human rights terminology, and ignore Palestinian terrorism, factional infighting, and corruption. *Alternatives* prominently highlights the Arab-Israeli conflict on both its French- and English-language homepages.<sup>5</sup> The “Palestine” section is one of only a few specific topics with their own links on both pages. This section lists numerous articles with provocative titles, such as “ Hamas and Israel’s ‘Right to Exist’ ”<sup>6</sup> and “ Starving a Nation, ”<sup>7</sup> as well as an interview with Norman Finkelstein,<sup>8</sup> widely criticized for his inflammatory publications.

*Alternatives* is a member of the Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine (CJPP), a network of radical organizations that promote boycotts, divestment, and sanctions against Israel. On its homepage, the CJPP calls for boycotts of “Israeli products, e.g. oranges, wines, etc” and “companies which support Israel.”<sup>9</sup> The CJPP regularly publishes documents labelling the separation barrier the “apartheid wall” and issues statements comparing Israel to apartheid South Africa.<sup>10</sup> According to a flyer on its website, the CJPP organized a “Palestine Day Celebration,” marking “40 years of Israeli Apartheid.”<sup>11</sup> *Alterna-*

*tives’* membership in the CJPP is further evidence of the highly politicized nature of the NGO’s agenda and activities.

In May 2007, NGO Monitor published a detailed report in English and French on *Alternatives*, documenting the above-mentioned anti-Israel activity.<sup>12</sup> After publication, NGO Monitor held discussions with Canadian government officials regarding the continued government funding for *Alternatives*.



## 1b. CHALLENGING THE NEW ISRAEL FUND “CIVIL RIGHTS” GRANTS

In October 2007, the New Israel Fund (NIF) organized the ‘NIForum,’ a 10-city North American tour of meetings on a “Progressive Vision for Israel.” This organization, whose stated mission is to fight for civil and human rights, promote religious tolerance and pluralism, as well as close the social and economic gaps in Israeli society, often funds politicized NGOs with a rejectionist pro-Palestinian agenda. The New Israel Fund acts as a fiscal agent for some NGOs, administering contributions from external sources and individual donors, and allowing them to receive tax deductible contributions in the United States. NIF also donates to certain NGOs from its own budget, amounting to more than twenty million dollars per year.<sup>13</sup>



As NGO Monitor’s detailed analysis has shown, NIF grants can be influenced by radical individuals, whose private agendas have been overwhelmingly rejected by Israeli voters.<sup>14</sup> NIF continues to use “civil society” grants to support groups such as Adalah, the Arab Human Rights Association (HRA), and HaMoked, which campaign against Israel in the United Nations and around the world using terms such as “racist” and “apartheid.” By extension, NIF’s “Progressive Vision for Israel” includes support for groups

which advocate an end to the Jewish nature of the State of Israel.

NGO Monitor challenged NIF’s position and NIF CEO, Larry Garber, responded: “We think it is constructive that a dialogue is initiated.” However, Prof. Gerald Steinberg of NGO Monitor pointed out (as quoted in media reports) that “[NIF] ha[s] refused any kind of offer for a dialogue. Instead they want to convince their supporters that what they’re doing is above board and acceptable. I have not seen any forum to which they’ve invited critics.”<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, the NIForum proved to be an inadequate response to the growing dissatisfaction and criticism expressed by NIF donors. The Forum pretended to provide the missing transparency, accountability and public debate, but the line-up of speakers was “the same old, same old,” all of whom belong to the NIF power structure.<sup>16</sup> As a result of the donors’ dissatisfaction, at least one donor withdrew his donation to NIF.

The media driven exchange between NGO Monitor and NIF has started an important debate and influenced NIF’s policy. In a welcome development, the New Israel Fund signed the “Statement of Core Principles for World Conference Against Racism (Durban) Follow Up,” issued by Magenta,<sup>17</sup> commit-

ting itself to avoiding racism, anti-Semitism and incitement at ‘Durban II.’ It remains to be seen whether the New Israel Fund will modify its funding policy in accordance with this commitment, curtailing funding to NGOs that do not meet this criteria.

1c. FORD FOUNDATION’S FUNDING OF POLITICIZED NGOS

The Ford Foundation’s stated mandate is to “reduce poverty and injustice, strengthen democratic values, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement.” With a grant budget of \$500 million per year, the Ford Foundation funds a number of NGOs involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Following the 2001 Durban Conference, in which Ford-funded groups led the NGO Forum responsible for the demonization of Israel, the Ford Foundation committed itself not to fund NGOs that “promote or engage in violence, terrorism, bigotry or the destruction of any state.” However, Ford continues to fund many of the same NGOs, some of which are planning to participate in the 2009 ‘Durban II’ conference.



NGO Monitor’s research revealed that, although in 2006 and 2007 (compared with 2005) the Ford Foundation modified its funding policy with regard to NGOs active in the Middle East, Ford (in conjunction with the New Israel Fund) continued to support many politicized NGOs, through indirect funding or multi-year grants.<sup>18</sup> These include major international organizations, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), as well as local Palestinian NGOs, such as the Democracy and Workers Rights Centre (DWRC), which

endorses the anti-Israel boycott movement. Some Ford funded organizations implement constructive programs, but many also exploit the rhetoric of human rights as part of the ‘Durban Strategy’ of demonizing and delegitimizing Israel. NGO Monitor’s 2007 report drew the Ford Foundation’s attention to the fact that continued funding of these radical political NGOs fuels the conflict and impedes the compromises necessary for a just and peaceful settlement.

NGO Monitor’s research generated media analyses of the Ford Foundation, as well as scrutiny of its commitment to the new funding guidelines. Although the Ford Foundation issued no direct response to our report, it did react to the ensuing media coverage, promising to review the issues raised by NGO Monitor. The results of this review have not yet been made public. Meanwhile, NGO Monitor’s Executive Director, Prof. Gerald Steinberg, met with members of the United States Congress in order to push for a congressional investigation into Ford’s funding.



**“Engel ‘Disappointed’ by Ford Forum for Mearsheimer”  
The New York Sun, September 10, 2007**

“...The executive director of the NGO Monitor, Gerald Steinberg, said that by funding a panel where Mr. Mearsheimer is scheduled to speak, the Ford Foundation risks renegeing on that promise by underwriting at Columbia the kind of falsehoods it was funding at Durban. Messrs. Walt and Mearsheimer ‘are repeating many of these myths and use similar rhetoric that singles out Israel, uses double standards, and is considered by many to be anti-Semitic,’ Mr.

Steinberg said. ‘On this basis, I would say that by helping promote this propaganda, Ford is violating its post-Durban pledge and repeating the same pattern.’

The [yet] unpublished report by the NGO Monitor concludes that overall, the Ford Foundation continued to support ‘problematic’ NGOs, even after its pledge to clean up its act. ‘There is a very real danger that Ford-funded NGOs will again lead the demonization of Israel,’ the report states.”

## 2. IMPACTING GOVERNMENTS AND DECISION MAKERS

NGO Monitor has supported change in government policies on NGO funding by initiating contact with decision makers, politicians and government officials around the world. And since January 2007, NGO Monitor has forged increasingly close ties with Israeli government ministries, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, and Defence.

As a result the Ministry of Justice released a detailed, nine-page response to a May 2007 report by B'Tselem and HaMoked, *Absolute Prohibition: The Torture and Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Detainees*, alleging torture by the Israel Security Agency. The response notes that the NGO report is "fraught with mistakes, groundless claims and inaccuracies."<sup>19</sup> Likewise, for the first time, the Justice Ministry released a detailed critique of Amnesty International's June 2007 report, *Enduring Occupation: Palestinians Under Siege in the West Bank*, stating that "Amnesty's report is one-sided, immoral, and riddled with mistakes and numerous factual and legal inaccuracies, including scant mention of Palestinian terrorism which holds non-combatants hostage, using them as human shields and camouflage." These public rebuttals reflect an important development in Israeli government engagement with NGOs.

NGO Monitor's growing contri-

bution to Israel's response was demonstrated in June 2007, when Executive Director Professor Gerald Steinberg was invited to present evidence before the Knesset's *Constitution, Law and Justice Committee*.

Prof. Steinberg was also invited to join the steering committee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Task Force in preparation for the upcoming Durban Review Conference. Over the past year, Prof. Steinberg has also briefed senior Israeli diplomats on the status of government funding for radical NGOs, persuading them to raise this issue in their meetings with foreign counterparts. As a result, the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland submitted NGO Monitor's material to the Irish government, challenging its funding of politicized NGOs active in the Middle East.

NGO Monitor's global impact on governments and decision makers was also felt in 2007. For the first time, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which receives numerous NGO submissions, accepted NGO Monitor's statement as evidence. So did the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' preparatory committee for 'Durban II,' to which NGO Monitor submitted an assess-

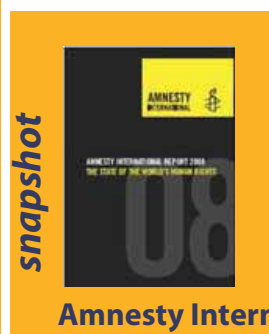
ment of the role of NGOs in initiating and implementing the 'Durban Strategy' of demonization at the 2001 Durban Conference. In May 2007, the Canadian government responded to NGO Monitor's discovery that one of its recipient NGOs, Alternatives, is involved in anti-Israel campaigns. Meanwhile, Finnish government official, Olli Ruohomaki, met with NGO Monitor staff, resulting in a fundamental change in Finnish policy on NGO funding. Consequently, "Projects receiving discretionary government grants must be in line with Finnish development policy goals and the UN's Millennium Development Goals. The preconditions for granting all the forms of support are the good reputation and reliability of the organization and the high quality of the development cooperation they undertake [...] [Finnish] Government support cannot be used for spreading an ideology or for religious work."<sup>20</sup>

NGO Monitor is continually engaged in similar discussions with government representatives from other countries. One of these encounters led to an official rebuttal of Amnesty International's annual report by the Australian Prime Minister, who commented that "the organization's current leadership seems to have lost sight of the need for any balance or rigour and has succumbed to the easy lure of moral relativism."<sup>21</sup> In addition to meetings with the British, Canadian and



Australian Ambassadors to Israel, NGO Monitor has also met with Japanese Foreign Ministry officials, as well as with several representatives of the European Union responsible for allocating funds to politicized NGOs in the region. It is our hope that such interactions will lead to significant policy changes with regard to NGO funding.

In October 2007, NGO Monitor staff met with Roy Dickinson, Head of Operations of the EU Commission's Technical Assistance Delegation to Gaza and the West Bank. Dickinson is responsible for signing contracts worth under one million euro for EU projects in the region, including many NGO allocations. Though new to his role, Dickinson was already aware of NGO Monitor and our research. He explained that applications are assessed based on their potential to effectively execute the suggested project, rather than on the applicant's ideology or political leanings. Nonetheless, he acknowledged NGO Monitor's concern that money allocated to grant recipients could possibly be diverted to purposes other than the proposed project.



**Amnesty International**

- NGO Monitor's detailed quantitative study showed that in 2007, Amnesty (AI) singled out Israel for more condemnation than Syria, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Lebanon, and Algeria. If detailed reports are used as an indicator, Amnesty ranks Israel and Iraq as equally the worst human rights abusers in the Middle East.<sup>i</sup>
- AI continued to apply the language of international humanitarian law selectively and unscientifically, demonizing Israel to a far greater extent than neighboring countries, including chronic abusers of human rights, such as Syria.
- Amnesty's 2008 annual report (covering events in 2007)<sup>ii</sup>

is yet another example of the NGO's highly biased approach. It presents a gross distortion of the conflict, selectively reports events to remove the context of terrorism and ignore human rights issues not related to its political agenda, while repeating un-sourced and anecdotal claims.

- The Israeli Justice Ministry's response to Amnesty's June 2007 report, "Enduring occupation Palestinians under siege in the West Bank" stated that "Amnesty's report is one-sided, immoral, and riddled with mistakes and numerous factual and legal inaccuracies, including scant mention of Palestinian terrorism."<sup>iii</sup>
- In 2007, in response to journalists' questions reflecting NGO Monitor's analyses, Amnesty officials admitted that external factors, such as potential for media attention, dictate Amnesty's research priorities.<sup>iv</sup>

**2a. NGO MONITOR’S SUBMISSION TO THE DURBAN PREPARATORY COMMITTEE**

In November 2006, the UN General Assembly resolved to convene a 2009 follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa in 2001. The Preparatory Committee (“Prepcom”) for the 2009 conference held its organizational review session between August 27-31, 2007, in Geneva. The meeting was chaired by Libya, well known for its dismal human rights record. Other members of the committee included Iran, Cuba, Russia, and South Africa.

In advance of the August 2007 Prepcom, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights invited NGOs to contribute “reviews” and “written

recommendations.”<sup>22</sup> To that end, NGO Monitor prepared a submission detailing the role of NGOs at the 2001 Durban Conference leading to the adoption and subsequent promotion of the “Durban Strategy” of demonization of Israel, and offering recommendations to prevent a repetition of these events in 2009.

NGO Monitor’s submission stated:

“Rather than provide objective information to address the crucial issue of eliminating discrimination in all its forms, and through universal standards, many statements of these NGOs and their activities during the 2001 NGO Forum

included highly inflammatory rhetoric and even anti-Semitic material, such as comparing the State of Israel to Nazi Germany. The Final Declaration of the NGO Forum endorsed the singling-out of Israel through a campaign that called for sanctions and boycotts against Israel through the abuse of the principles of human rights and international law.”

It urged the Prepcom to carefully examine the lack of credibility and biases arising from the participation of politicized NGOs, in order to prevent a recurrence of the outcome of the 2001 Durban Conference.

Since then, one of the central foci of NGO Monitor is the cov-

*continued on page 13*

**“‘Durban 2’ – A Fiasco in the Making,”  
Feature Item, *The Jerusalem Report*  
[Print edition only], October 1, 2007**

“Indeed, the anti-Israel NGOs may have gone too far for their own good. In Durban, over 80 NGOs from 35 countries in Europe, the former Soviet Union, North America and South Asia disavowed the final NGO declaration, arguing that they had not been consulted and objecting specifically to the chapters on ‘Palestine and the Palestinians,’ and anti-Semitism. More-

over, governments and pro-Israel NGOs, taken by surprise by the ferocity of the Israel-bashing in Durban, will be on their guard this time. ‘Hopefully the European governments and some of the wiser and more professional elements of the U.N.

will have learned the lesson and will prevent these radical NGOs from again becoming the dominant factor or perhaps from participating at all,’ says Prof. Gerald Steinberg, Bar Ilan University Conflict resolution expert and director of NGO Monitor, an organization founded to scrutinize radical NGOs in the wake of Durban 1...”



erage of events and publications leading up to the 2009 Conference. It is our hope that by pressuring NGOs and their funders to adhere to basic principles and by holding them accountable for their words and actions, they will exercise greater caution at the upcoming conference and strive to maintain a universal standard of human rights.

In pursuit of this goal, NGO Monitor's Annual Conference in December addressed the role of human rights NGOs in determining the agenda and results of 'Durban II.' Moreover, Prof. Gerald Steinberg has been active on the Israeli government's 'Durban II' steering committee and strategy team.

In recent months, NGO Monitor has cooperated with other organizations and interest groups involved in planning for the conference. NGO Monitor has contacted officials, members and funders of NGOs, particularly those involved in the 2001 NGO Forum at Durban I, such as the Ford Foundation and several European governments, to ascertain their positions regarding participation in and guidelines for the 2009 conference. NGO Monitor has also raised these issues at the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Global Anti-Semitism Forum, at the Conference of Presidents Israel Mission and at the Jerusalem Conference.

The Canadian government's intention to withdraw from

this event (with the support of the opposition parties) reflects NGO Monitor's impact, as does French President Sarkozy's announcement that France will not participate in another such anti-Semitic conference.<sup>23</sup>

**"Boycotting Israel:  
New pariah on the block"**  
*The Economist*,  
September 13, 2007

Economist.com WORLD INTERNATIONAL

"...FOR once, Israel's critics and cheerleaders agree on something: the Jewish state risks greater international isolation. Pro-Israel groups such as NGO Monitor and the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs say a new assault is on the way. In the other camp, Shir Hever of the Alternative Information Centre, an Israeli-Palestinian activist group in Jerusalem, says that advocating a boycott is no longer always treated as anti-Semitism. Both sides have a motive to exaggerate such claims. But 'boycotts, divestments and sanctions' (known in the activist world as 'BDS') do seem to be growing. Pro-Israel lobbyists see this as part of what they call the 'Durban strategy', devised by activists at a United Nations anti-racism conference there in 2001, which marked a new high point for Israel-bashing..."

Human Rights Watch

- Although HRW’s relative focus on Israel in 2007 declined compared to 2006, the disproportionate emphasis, and the examples of bias and double standards continue. Despite a major increase in internal Palestinian violence during 2007, including the Hamas takeover of Gaza, HRW’s disproportionate emphasis on

Israel continued, with major reports covering 400 pages in 2007, using methodologies that lack credibility. Israel was also the focus of more multimedia items (audio, video, graphics) than any other country in the region.

- HRW accused Israel of “collective punishment” of Palestinians in a way that is inconsistent with both international law and past and present usage of the term by HRW itself.<sup>i</sup> (Israel is the only case where HRW used “collective punishment” to refer to a blockade and the potential impact on civilian life. In other cases, this term is used to describe beatings, murder and destruction of prop-

erty as indiscriminate retaliation against a group of people for the acts of members of that group.)

- In comments published in Tikkun Magazine, HRW Executive Director Ken Roth employed a selective, incomplete, self-serving portrayal of international law to justify the moral equivalence between Israel and terrorist organizations. Roth attempted to limit HRW to a “neutral” approach that ignores the difference between aggressor and victim, enabling unfair criticism of Israel’s rightful self-defense against terrorist aggression.<sup>ii</sup>

IMPACTING GOVERNMENTS AND DECISION MAKERS

2b. DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF THE WORLD BANK REPORT

On May 9, 2007, the World Bank published a report entitled “Movement and Access Restrictions in the West Bank: Uncertainty and Inefficiency in the Palestinian Economy,” focusing entirely on one dimension of the complex issues.<sup>24</sup> Although the authors do briefly note that “Israel had legitimate reasons to take steps to protect its citizens from violence,” they immediately dismiss the implications of Palestinian terrorism and blame Israel for the ongoing conflict. The report is inconsistent with the World Bank’s apolitical humanitarian mission.

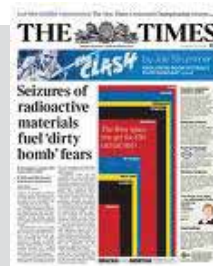
NGO Monitor’s analysis demonstrates that the claims made throughout this report by the World Bank’s “technical team” lack credibility and are based entirely on the publications of

highly politicized groups and NGOs, including B’Tselem, Peace Now, HaMoked, Bimkom, Amnesty International, and UN OCHA.<sup>25</sup> This is a clear example of the power of the “halo effect,” which magnifies the impact of these unverified NGO reports through repetition by ostensibly credible organizations such as the World Bank.

Following the publication of this report, the Knesset invited

NGO Monitor to address the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee. NGO Monitor staff presented counter-evidence and pushed for further investigation of the claims made by the World Bank. They asserted that the allegations contained in that report cannot reliably be used by policy makers attempting to deal with the challenges posed by the combination of ongoing Palestinian violence and economic crisis.

**“Blunt Words Hurt the Holy Land”**  
 letter by Dr. Andre Oboler,  
*The Times* (UK)  
 December 24, 2007



“Yet, the difference between the Oxfam press release and the details of the World Bank report are startling...For NGOs to play a full part in the debate, they must do their research and properly consider the context.”

## 2c. NGO MONITOR’S SUBMISSION TO THE UN COMMITTEE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

On February 22 and 23, 2007, the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) charged with monitoring the implementation of the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination held its periodic review session on Israel. Many politicized NGOs operating in the Arab-Israeli conflict submitted statements to CERD, including Adalah, ICAHD, BADIL, Ittijah, Al Mezan, Al Haq, and Amnesty International.

For the first time, NGO Monitor also submitted evidence in order to highlight the credibility deficit in many NGO statements. NGO Monitor’s report details the problems arising

from reliance on politicized NGOs, which claim to promote universal human rights but, instead, advance biased political agendas based on a highly distorted narrative. Instead of promoting racial equality and fighting discrimination, these statements merely amplify the conflict by utilizing evocative rhetoric to demonize Israel, stripping away the context of mass terror and making false historical claims. NGO Monitor believes that the Committee’s reliance on such allegations “greatly diminish[es] the impact of CERD’s work and [...] harm[s] the universal principles the international community sought to uphold when

it adopted the ICERD.”

NGO Monitor’s submission seems to have had a moderating effect on the Committee, which noted the sharp discrepancy between NGO reports and official government statements. While the “Concluding Observations of CERD,”

published on June 14, 2007, does criticize certain aspects of civil rights in Israel and the disputed territories, a large section also praises Israel and expresses satisfaction with the advances toward greater equality among its citizens.<sup>26</sup>



### Israel Committee Against House Demolitions

- Funded by the EU’s “Partnership for Peace” program, the Israel Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) states that its goal is “to oppose and resist Israeli demolition of Palestinian houses in the Occupied Territories.” In reality, the

evidence shows that this NGO is an extremely politicized lobbying group, whose activities extend far beyond issues of housing. ICHAD campaigns for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel and has consistently labeled Israel an “apartheid” state, promoting the Durban strategy of demonization.

- ICAHD’s submission to the February 2007 United Nation’s Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) session claims to provide “statistics” on the number of Palestinian homes demol-

ished in the West Bank.<sup>i</sup> No sources for these allegations are provided, making independent verification of ICAHD’s claims impossible. Moreover, ICAHD’s claims that Israeli planning and development policies are founded exclusively on racism and ideology are baseless.<sup>ii</sup>

- In a February 2007 article on Al-Jazeera’s website, ICAHD Director-Coordinator Jeff Halper refers to the separation barrier as the “Apartheid Wall” and describes its purpose as being “to continue ethnically cleansing Palestinians.”<sup>iii</sup>



## 2d. NGO MONITOR'S SUBMISSION TO THE WINOGRAD COMMITTEE

The Winograd Commission, appointed by the Israeli government to investigate and draw lessons from the 2006 Second Lebanon War, published its final report on January 30, 2008. Among other issues, it dealt with the question of whether or not Israel committed human rights violations during the conflict.<sup>27</sup>

Prior to the publication of the Winograd Report, NGO Monitor submitted a statement to the Commission, which analyzed the inaccuracies in reports by politicized human rights NGOs during the 2006 Lebanon War, as well as highlighting their exploitation of human rights rhetoric and international humanitarian law to promote an anti-Israel agenda.

Major NGOs claiming unbiased devotion to human rights, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW), published numerous reports primarily condemning Israeli military actions during the war. Throughout these reports, they accused Israel of war crimes and violations of international law, while minimizing Hezbollah's abduction of Israeli soldiers; its use of human shields; and indiscriminate rocket attacks targeting Israeli civilians. These claims, often based on "evidence" gathered from Lebanese eyewitnesses, whose credibility and links to Hezbollah remain unverified, and using a double standard and selective or misleading data, conclude that Israel vio-

lated human rights. Accompanied by strong public relations campaigns, these NGO declarations were blindly repeated by the media and politicians, with little critical scrutiny on their part.

In its submission, NGO Monitor presented extensive documentation of NGO distortions regarding the 2006 Lebanon War, advising the Winograd Commission to independently verify all NGO claims before considering them as evidence of human rights violations. NGO Monitor's recommendations were taken seriously by the Commission, which rejected the NGOs' baseless accusations, concluding that the IDF did not commit violations or "war crimes," as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and other NGOs repeatedly alleged. The commission stated, "International law distinguishes between citizens killed accidentally who were in the area of a legitimate military target, and between citizens that were wounded as the result of deliberate attacks on civilians."<sup>28</sup> Evidence shows that the IDF did not target civilians, and terms like "war crimes" are without basis, despite claims by Hezbollah and many NGOs.

The Commission further concluded that "Claims regarding violations of international law were a central part of the political, image, and propaganda

war that accompanies warfare in general, and the Lebanon war in particular.... We did not find it appropriate to deal with issues that are part of a political and propaganda war against the State."<sup>29</sup> This conclusion is consistent with NGO Monitor's submission to the Commission.<sup>30</sup>



### 3. NGO MONITOR'S SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On December 5, 2007, NGO Monitor hosted a successful conference in Jerusalem, titled *Preparing for Durban II: NGOs, Public Opinion and the Exploitation of Human Rights*. The high calibre audience included officials from the American, British, German, Dutch and Greek embassies, as well as UN officials and journalists from *The Guardian*, *El Pais*, *Yisrael Hayom* and *Makor Rishon*.

In preparation for the conference, several NGOs were invited to speak, but almost all declined the invitation, including B'Tselem, Oxfam, Amnesty International and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. To their credit, representatives of Rabbis for Human Rights and Médecins Sans Frontières did present their positions at the conference, resulting in a lively and productive debate.

In the first session of the packed conference, the EU Ambassador to Israel, Ramiro Cibrian-Uzal, emphasized the EU's insistence on transparency when directing funds to NGOs in the region. In response, former Israeli Ambassador to the EU, Dr. Oded Eran, called for greater scrutiny and an increased awareness of the political nature of such NGOs, before allocating funds to them.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jan Van T'Land, Head of Médecins Sans

Frontières' Jerusalem Mission, outlined his delegation's unique funding model, which refuses public funds and the responsibilities they entail.

*Jerusalem Post* senior columnist, Calev Ben-David, and former defence correspondent, Arie O'Sullivan, engaged in a lively debate on the impact of NGOs in the media. Both panellists agreed that NGOs play an important role as independent sources for journalists. Yet, they cautioned correspondents to be sceptical of their self-representation as apolitical or impartial organizations.

During an intense final session, Prof. Gerald Steinberg, NGO Monitor's Executive Director, and Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Executive Director of Rabbis for Human Rights, examined each other's work, demonstrating NGO Monitor's commitment to public debate. Prof. Steinberg accused NGOs of fuelling the demonization of Israel and called upon Rabbis for Human Rights to avoid sharing platforms with radical anti-Israel NGOs. Rabbi Ascherman described his organization's work as "sacred" and "vital to the State of Israel" and lauded the contribution of NGOs to the advancement of human rights worldwide.



*EU Ambassador to Israel, Amb Ramiro Cibrian*



*Prof Gerald Steinberg debates Rabbi Arik Ascherman of Rabbis for Human Rights*

## 4. EXPANDING NGO MONITOR'S INTERNET PRESENCE

NGO Monitor's website, [www.ngo-monitor.org](http://www.ngo-monitor.org), is the primary resource and access point to the organization's vast research library. Moreover, it expresses the organization's goals and structure, providing continual updates on its activities.

NGO Monitor constantly seeks to enhance the website, making it more efficient and user-friendly. In 2007, NGO Monitor developed a content management system, which ranks and displays all related material to any article on the website. This improves the site as a research tool, and boosts Google ratings which are essential for a successful site. The introduction of French and Hebrew sections to the website, enabling a whole new audience to engage in the work of NGO Monitor, represents another major development. We have also added a function which enables videos

to be uploaded to the site. We are continually evaluating the homepage design and steadily implementing innovations, such as a scrolling list featuring the five newest items on the site, in order to maximise readership of our most current material.

NGO Monitor scrutinizes website traffic as an indicator of our impact. From January to June 2007, average daily unique visits increased by an impressive 94%. Moreover, the average number of daily hits increased by 18% between September and December 2007.<sup>31</sup> Another indication of progress is that the majority of traffic to the website now originates from search engines, such as Google, demonstrating that significant numbers are searching the internet for NGO Monitor.<sup>32</sup> This trend has developed so that

Google searches for NGOs often list NGO Monitor higher than the NGO's own website.

In May 2007, NGO Monitor launched its blog (<http://blog.ngo-monitor.org>), to provide a new forum for debate and exchange of information, in a rapidly developing area of communication. 75% of the blog's users in November 2007 were new visitors, indicating a siz-



able market of interested readers. The blog has increased website traffic by linking NGO Monitor to other blogs and strengthening NGO Monitor's presence within the online NGO and human rights community, making it the primary address for those seeking information on human rights NGOs active in the Middle East.



- In June 2007 reports attacking Israeli policy in response to Palestinian violence, Christian Aid relied on the claims of highly politicized NGOs which lack credibility, such as Al-Haq, Palestinian NGO Network, the

Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees, and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights.<sup>1</sup>

- In response to NGO Monitor's criticism regarding Christian Aid's association with anti-Israel NGOs, a Christian Aid spokesperson affirmed their support and "pride" for "our partners on the ground."<sup>ii</sup>
- Christian Aid's one-sided political agenda is entirely inconsistent with the status of a registered charity and raises

questions regarding substantial funding for the organization by the Irish and UK governments.

- Christian Aid selectively applies international legal terminology such as "war crimes" and "collective punishment," and reinforces these accusations with highly emotive, yet unverifiable anecdotal accounts. These practices constitute a violation of Christian Aids stated position of being an "impartial" group working toward peace and the alleviation of poverty.

## 5. NGO MONITOR IN THE MEDIA

In 2007 NGO Monitor broadened its distribution list by targeting prominent journalists and media personalities. Our extensive media coverage since the beginning of 2007 is a clear indication of the success on this front.

NGO Monitor's research was cited in important international publications on 72 separate occasions, including in depth op-eds and letters to the editor in prestigious titles, such as the *National Review Online*, *Ma'ariv* (with a daily circulation of 160,000), *The Economist* (UK), the *London Times*, *New York Sun*, and Australia's *Courier Sun*. NGO Monitor's work was also quoted by 57 different websites, including *Guardian Unlimited*. In addition, we have had the opportunity to brief correspondents from *Fox News*, *Bloomberg News*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Time Magazine*, laying the groundwork for future media exposure.

NGO Monitor featured on Israel Channel 1 TV



On November 5, 2007, Israel's Channel One flagship current

affairs show, *'Mabat Sheni'* (*'Second Look'*), screened an hour-long exposé of the politicized and ideological nature of UNWRA and human rights NGOs in the region, heavily featuring NGO Monitor's research. This television segment was just one of Professor Gerald Steinberg's three television appearances over the course of the year, in addition to Canadian television and *'Politika'*, Israel's Channel One primetime current affairs show. Moreover, NGO Monitor was featured six times on the radio, including an appearance by Jason Pearlman on Israel's *Reshet Bet*, with over one million listeners. Prof. Steinberg was also interviewed on *Reshet Bet*, as well as on Polish national radio.

Furthermore, blogs, including *Little Green Footballs* and *Honest Reporting*, cited NGO Monitor's research 184 times. The blog world is a rapidly expanding form of communication, and has become a forum for debate and commentary about human rights NGOs. Its frequent citation of NGO Monitor's work enhances NGO Monitor's position within the NGO community by targeting a new type of audience.

These achievements are a testimony to NGO Monitor's growing reputation and active role in informing the debate on human rights NGOs.

**'Righting Rights Wrongs'**  
by Prof Gerald Steinberg,  
*National Review Online*,  
December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007



"The 'halo effect' enjoyed by the U.N. and NGO human-rights network two or three decades ago has also been eroded by reports which make headlines, but are later shown to be fabricated or unverifiable. Lacking their own research capabilities, groups such as HRW and Amnesty rely on 'local eyewitnesses' for evidence in Colombia (FARC), Gaza (Hamas), Lebanon (Hezbollah), and elsewhere. However, there are numerous documented cases in which these 'eyewitnesses' are part of the political warfare which exploits the rhetoric of human rights by making false claims. They know that their reports, regardless of the lack of evidence or context, will be used to promote boycotts, demonization, and other political campaigns. In this way, human rights have become a vehicle to promote incitement, hatred, and terror — the antithesis of the objectives proclaimed in 1948."

## 6. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2007

	<u>2007</u>		
	<u>Funds that are not restricted</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Used for Activities</u>	<u>Used for Fixed Assets</u>	
Opening balances	-	-	-
<b><u>Receipts</u></b>			
Donations	204,657	-	204,657
<b><u>Cost of Activities</u></b>	(151,249)	-	(151,249)
Surplus from activities	53,408	-	53,408
Administrative and general expenses	(28,470)	-	(28,470)
<b>Surplus for the period</b>	24,938	-	24,938
<b>Other changes during the period:</b>			
Amounts transferred to cover depreciation expenses	2,623	(2,623)	-
Amounts transferred to cover purchases of fixed assets	(9,417)	9,417	-
<b>Total changes for the period</b>	18,144	6,794	24,938
<b>Net assets as at December 31, 2007</b>	<b>18,144</b>	<b>6,794</b>	<b>24,938</b>

**NGO Monitor's donors include:**

**Wechsler Family Foundation (founding donor), Boston**

**Nina Rosenwald, New York**

**Newt Becker, Los Angeles**

## 7. LOOKING AHEAD: NGO MONITOR IN 2008

Since 2002, NGO Monitor has grown from a tiny project, to a formidable research centre, with international credibility and the ear of the NGO Superpowers. We will continue to expand in 2008, to increase the scope of both our research and our impact. Future plans include:

### **International Developments**

In addition to our Jerusalem office, NGO Monitor is in the process of establishing branches in the United States and Europe. Having representatives in major political capitals outside Israel will significantly increase NGO Monitor's impact on NGOs, government officials, journalists, think tanks and public opinion throughout the world. These centers will publicize and disseminate our material to a wider, influential audience of decision-makers and institutions.

### **Hebrew and Other Language Desks**

Currently, NGO Monitor's main activities revolve around English language publications. It is our intention to diversify by creating a Hebrew Desk to increase awareness and impact among Israelis, including journalists, students and academics, in the Knesset, and with respect to policy makers.

The Hebrew Desk will expand the Hebrew components of NGO Monitor's website and strengthen our ties with and exposure in the Israeli press and public.

The contribution of the Arabic Desk cannot be overstated. It will allow for more thorough research of Arab NGOs' websites and publications. Moreover, the Arabic Desk will facilitate access to and dialogue with the Arabic media and Arabic-speaking populations.

In addition, as resources permit, we intend to expand our publications in European languages.

### **Specialist NGO Researchers**

NGO Superpowers such as Amnesty and Human Rights Watch are extremely influential in shaping how the media, governments and academics view human rights violations. NGO Monitor plans to expand to dedicate two researchers to concentrate solely on the activities of these NGOs, check their reports for accuracy and publish frequent evaluations.

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### ***Snapshot: Christian Aid***

<sup>i</sup> "Israel & Palestine: A Question of Viability." Christian Aid. June 2007. Available at [http://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Israel%20and%20Palestine%20A%20Question%20of%20Viability\\_tcm15-24551.pdf](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Israel%20and%20Palestine%20A%20Question%20of%20Viability_tcm15-24551.pdf)

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<sup>ii</sup> Conger, Rev. Canon George. "Christian Aid denies it is biased in the Middle East: CEN 9.14.07 p 8." Church of England Newspaper. 17 Sept. 2007. Available at <http://geoconger.wordpress.com/2007/09/17/christian-aid-denies-it-is-biased-in-the-middle-east-cen-91407-p-8/>



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