



Promoting critical debate and accountability of  
human rights NGOs in the Arab-Israeli conflict

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Edward Steen  
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Dear Mr. Steen,

In his letter of 12 June 2008, responding to my article ("EU's lack of transparency worsens the Arab-Israeli conflict", European Voice, 6 June 08) Daleep Mukarji from Christian Aid wrote "Christian Aid has never taken a position on this (BDS) campaign" and that the European Voice "failed to check the accuracy of the allegations made."

While Christian Aid (CA) may claim not to have taken an "official" position on the anti-Israel boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns (BDS), NGO Monitor research has found that this organization provides financial, logistical, institutional, and other forms of support to various NGOs and conferences that are centrally involved.

Examples include:

In October 2007, Christian Aid was listed as a "partner supporting the conference" of an Ittijah initiated conference held in Cyprus, which included some of the most ardent supporters of BDS, such as the Palestinian Grassroots anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, Palestine BDS Campaign, and the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO). The conference's final statement called upon NGOs to "turn[] utmost attention to the boycott, divestment and sanction campaign against Israel and pursuing the parastata Zionist organizations worldwide." Christian Aid's support (whether logistical, financial, institutional or other – Ittijah is a Christian Aid partner) enabled NGOs to convene and strategize, publicize and advance the campaign of BDS in this event. Christian Aid also did not publicly repudiate the final statement.

In other cases, Christian Aid provides direct support and a platform for groups that explicitly endorse BDS. These include Sabeel, a radical Jerusalem-based NGO headed by Naim Ateek that claims to espouse an ecumenical liberation theology, but uses Christian theological images to promote demonization of Israel as an "apartheid state." Sabeel, an official CA "partner," led the international campaign for "morally responsible investment" (aka divestment) in 2005/6, and CA's Chair of the Board of Trustees, Rev.

John Gladwin, is “patron” of Sabeel's UK branch. Gladwin was extremely vocal in promoting and then defending the vote for divestment in the Anglican Church Synod in February 2006.

Christian Aid also provides financial support to the Alternative Information Center (AIC) – another CA partner and consistent supporter of BDS. NGO Monitor's research at Israel's Registry of Non Profit Organizations (Rasham Haamutot) revealed that AIC received NIS 328,395 (€64,188) from CA in 2006. AIC has accused Israel of ethnic cleansing and published inflammatory articles blaming Israel for intra-Palestinian violence.

Despite CA claims that it has "never taken a position on [the BDS] campaign," the evidence presented here (which is only a fraction of that available) indicates that it provides financial, logistical and institutional support and legitimacy to proponents of these views. We would hope that Christian Aid leaders would end such links, which are inconsistent with a commitment to justice, universal human rights and peaceful resolution of conflict.

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Cc: Prof. Gerald Steinberg, Executive Director, NGO Monitor