



JUNE
2016

GERMAN FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS INVOLVING CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT (ENGLISH EDITION)

NGO MONITOR



German Federal Frameworks Involving Civil Society in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

June 2016

NGO Monitor's mission is to provide
information
and analysis, promote accountability, and
support discussion on the reports and
activities of NGOs claiming to advance

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Organization in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social
Council since 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report examines funding to organizations active in the Arab-Israeli conflict, allocated through the following German federal government frameworks: The [Civil Peace Service](#) (ZFD); The German Society for International Cooperation ([GIZ](#)); [federally sponsored](#) church aid; and the [Institute for Foreign Relations](#) (IFA). The report also examines funding allocated through German embassies and federally funded political foundations.

The involvement of civil society in government-level policymaking and implementation in the Federal Republic of Germany is unique, both in its extent and its nature. Through the abovementioned mechanisms, actors with openly political agendas are granted millions of euros by the federal government, which are in turn redistributed to local civil society throughout the world.

German federal funding is allocated to, amongst others, organizations that promote anti-Israel [BDS](#) (boycott, divestment and sanctions) and “[lawfare](#)” campaigns, anti-Zionism, promotion of a “one-state” vision, antisemitism and violence.

German federal funding frameworks are severely lacking in terms of transparency and public scrutiny. Selection processes, precise amounts, project evaluations, and sometimes partner organizations are not made publicly available.

According to reports submitted by NGOs to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits, **in 2012-2015 alone, €4 million of German taxpayer money was allocated to 15 Israeli NGOs** (this may be a partial amount, as not all Israel NGOs adhere to the submission requirements); **42% of which went to organizations that promote BDS and/or “one-state” visions.**

The Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) - the primary German federal donor to civil society organizations and activities - consults with and funds a select group of German NGOs and church groups that are heavily involved in federal-level decision making and enjoy considerable flexibility and independence with the funds entrusted to them. **Many of these organizations – such as [Brot fuer die Welt/EED](#), [Kurve Wustrow](#) and [Weltfriedensdienst](#) (WFD) - are members of multiple BMZ frameworks and enjoy inflated representation.**

Beyond nurturing long-term partnerships with highly politicized local NGOs, a number of federally sponsored German organizations participate themselves in blatant political activities in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict – through lobbying, publicizing statements, signing petitions, or promoting advocacy publications.

The German federal government commissions independent evaluations for the various programs and projects it supports. However, these are either conducted infrequently or not made publicly available. They tend to be very broad in scope, and thus cannot uncover failings at the local implementation level.

In 2011, BMZ commissioned Riccardo Bocco – a Swiss development expert who has questioned Israel’s status as a democracy, accused Israel of “state terrorism” equating it with Hamas, and has ties with fringe anti-Israel BDS groups – to evaluate projects in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. In his report, Bocco recommended the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC), a Palestinian organization involved in violent activities, as a local partner for BMZ.

INTRODUCTION

The involvement of civil society in government-level policy making and implementation in the Federal Republic of Germany is unique, both in its extent and its nature. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) affect a number of policy areas, most prominently in the arena of foreign development aid, but also in German foreign policy. Federally-funded political foundations that support and partner with NGOs are also active in these policy areas.

Through a variety of mechanisms, actors with openly political agendas are granted millions of euros by the federal government, which are in turn redistributed to local civil society throughout the world.

The following report maps out these different platforms provided by German federal frameworks for the funding and involvement of civil society, and the implications of such involvement on accountability, transparency, and policy making and implementation in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The report will highlight cases of severely compromised transparency, as well as cases of irresponsible funding that is inconsistent with officially stated German government objectives – specifically funding that enables anti-Israel BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions), “lawfare,” anti-Zionism, promotion of a “one-state” vision, antisemitism, and violence.

The lack of transparency is reflected in the failure to publish accurate and complete information on grantees of German federal funds. Other than in cases of funding to Israeli NGOs, which are required by law to submit financial reports to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits, precise amounts are unavailable. German funding programs post only general project descriptions on their websites, in many cases not providing a full list of partner organizations. According to the Israeli Registrar, in 2012-2015 alone, €4 million of German taxpayer money was allocated to 15 Israeli NGOs (this may be a partial amount, as not all Israel NGOs adhere to the submission requirements); 42% of which went to organizations that promote BDS and/or “one-state” visions. This does not include Palestinian NGO grantees or German and international actors working locally.

The first section of this report provides a general overview of federal government bodies that involve civil society, followed by sections examining each government body in detail with examples. A final section will review evaluation mechanisms of the German federal government, touching upon issues of transparency, reliability, and objectivity.

1. OVERVIEW OF GERMAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BODIES INVOLVING CIVIL SOCIETY

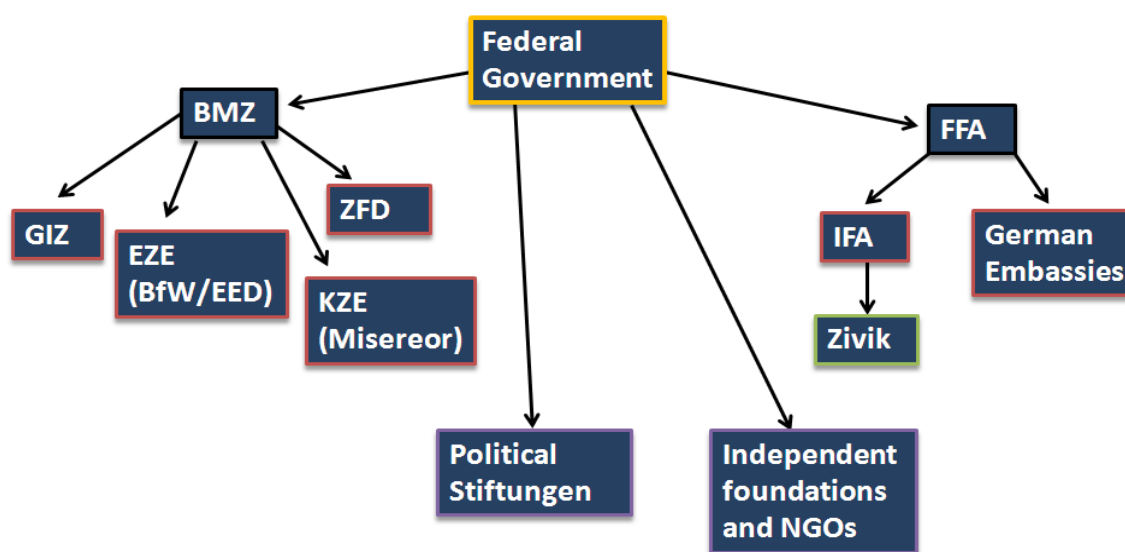
Of all policy areas, foreign development aid is the foremost area of cooperation between the German federal government and civil society, led by the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Germany is one of the leading countries worldwide in providing development aid, and was the second largest bilateral donor ([€10.2 billion](#)) after the United States in 2011. As shown in the next section, the BMZ involves civil society in its policy formation and implementation extensively, through numerous platforms.

In addition to development policy, German foreign policy led by the Federal Foreign Office (FFO) also involves civil society. A primary example is the Institution for Foreign Relations (IFA), funded by the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg and the municipality of Stuttgart, which aims to promote coexistence by fostering cultural exchange. In addition, German embassies

acting on behalf of the FFA fund local civil society in their respective countries.

Aside from its development and foreign policies, Germany is home to the unique phenomenon of “politische Stiftungen” - political foundations that are affiliated with parliamentary parties and receive government funds in direct proportion to the percentage of seats held, for the stated purposes of educating the public on democratic participation, encouraging academic achievements, and promoting democratic practices in foreign countries. The latter is the most heavily funded aspect of the foundations’ work, and consists of project and core funding to non-German civil society organizations.

Finally, a number of independent German NGOs are active in conflict and poverty-stricken regions around the world, and are heavily funded by the German federal government.



German Federal Funding Channels to Civil Society

2. MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (BMZ)

The Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is the primary German federal donor to civil society organizations and activities. For 2016, it was granted a budget [increase](#) of 13.5% - the biggest in its history. As stated by the BMZ, “The additional funding will help us... increase our important cooperation with civil society, faith-based organisations, German municipalities and the private sector.” In line with this aim, [12.7%](#) (€942.8 million) of the 2016 BMZ budget is directly allocated to “civil society and business groups and institutions.”

2.1. Civil Peace Service

The BMZ program [Civil Peace Service](#) (ZFD) “sends experts to international partner organisations in order to prevent the outbreak of violence without military action and to strengthen the force of civil society.” This is done via a number of German member NGOs that work in partnership with local

“partner organisations” of their choice. Although ZFD member NGOs enjoy considerable independence in determining their activities and partners, the program is entirely funded by BMZ.

Currently Running Projects (as of May 2016):

“Nonviolent Conflict Transformation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories”:

Implementing German organization: Association for Development Aid ([AGEH](#)); local partner organizations: [Society of St. Yves](#), Kairos Palestine.

- Kairos Palestine promotes the 2009 [Kairos Palestine document](#), authored together with St. Yves founder Michel Sabah. This document commends and encourages violence, claiming that Israel falsely defines “armed resistance” as terrorism in order to “distort the real nature of the conflict, presenting it as an Israeli war against terror, rather than an Israeli occupation faced by Palestinian **legal resistance** aiming at ending it... **Resistance is a right and a duty for Christians and all Palestinians**. We clearly support this right to resist the prolonged occupation and aggressions by successive Israeli governments” (emphasis added). The Kairos document also denies the Jewish historical connection to Israel in theological terms, calls to mobilize churches worldwide in the call for BDS, and compares Israel with the South African apartheid regime.

“Training for Peace and Human Rights”:

Implementing German organization: Weltfriedensdienst (WFD); local partner organization: [Al-Haq](#).

- Al-Haq is a leader in the anti-Israel BDS and legal warfare campaigns and has [proposed](#) sabotaging the Israeli court system by “flooding the [Israeli Supreme] Court with petitions in the hope of obstructing its functioning and resources.” The Israeli Supreme Court has [identified](#) Al-Haq’s general director Shawan Jabarin as “among the senior activists of the Popular Front terrorist organization.” (The PFLP is a designated terrorist organization by the EU.)
- On a [website](#) of WFD dedicated to the issue of denied access to water, WFD prominently [features](#) Al-Haq’s report from 2013: “Water for one People Only: Discriminatory Access and ‘Water-Apartheid’ in the OPT.” This report is part of a [broader campaign](#) falsely suggesting that Israel steals water from Palestinians in order to interfere with cooperation between European companies and the Israeli water company Mekorot.

“Strengthening Nonviolent Initiatives”:

Implementing German organization: KURVE Wustrow; local partner organizations: [Coalition of Women for Peace \(CWP\)](#) and Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC).

According to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits, in 2013-2015 CWP received NIS 1,320,109 from Kurve Wustrow for the implementation of this project.

- CWP [actively supports](#) “the call for cultural and economic boycott, divestment and international sanctions to increase pressure on Israel from the international community.... and is particularly effective against Israel that systematically violates international norms.” Initiated the “[Who Profits?](#)” campaign and database, which identifies targets for anti-Israel BDS. CWP officials have been [photographed](#) holding a flag of the PFLP terrorist organization. (Following a publication by NGO Monitor, this image was removed from CWP’s [Facebook page](#).)

remembering jawaher abu rahma 6/1/12

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Coalition of Women for Peace with Mahasen Rabus and Maayan Dak.
Like · Comment · Share · January 11, 2012

Tags: Coalition of Women for Peace
Album: remembering jawaher abu rahma
6/1/12

- PSCC has [organized protests that have turned violent](#). Video of PSCC protests in [Hebron](#), [Kfer Qaddum](#), [Nilin](#), [Nabi Saleh](#) and [Beituniya](#) shows protesters hurling rocks, throwing sharp objects, trying to destroy the security barrier, and arson. PSCC's Twitter activity repeatedly employs "[martyr](#)" rhetoric and [boasts](#) photos of demonstrators hurling rocks. An [invitation](#) to an event tweeted by PSCC on December 20, 2015 features the hand of a demonstrator full of rocks.



2.2. German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)

The German Society for International Cooperation ([GIZ](#)) is a "public-benefit federal enterprise" that provides "services worldwide in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development." The GIZ leads several projects in the West Bank, many in partnership with local NGOs. These projects are commissioned and paid for by BMZ.

GIZ Projects:

["Empowering Women Leaders in Government and Civil society in the Middle East"](#) (2015-2019)

Local Palestinian partner organizations include [Miftah](#).

- Miftah publishes articles accusing Israel of "[massacre](#)," "[cultural genocide](#)," "[war crimes](#)," and "[apartheid](#)." In 2013 Miftah [published](#) an article repeating an antisemitic blood libel, claiming that Jews kidnapped and murdered the children of Chris-

tians to use their blood as part of a religious ritual during Jewish holidays. Only after significant public criticism, Miftah removed the article.

[“Media Sound and Light Program”](#) (2013-2015):

According to the [website](#) of Palestinian NGO Community Development & Continuing Education Institute (CDCE-I), this project, with CDCE-I as implementing partner, was part of the GIZ TVET (technical vocational education and training) program in 2013-2015. CDCE-I lists [Ma’an News agency](#) as a project partner.

- Ma’an News features analyses and commentary referring to terrorism as [“resistance”](#) and accusing Israel of [“war crimes,” “genocide,” “massacres,” “human rights violations,”](#) acting with [“impunity”](#) and maintaining a [“system of segregation and apartheid.”](#)
- In February 2016, seven Members of the European parliament (MEPs) submitted a [parliamentary question](#) to the European Commission, expressing concern that the European Union had funded Ma’an News, which “has been responsible in recent years for material that glorifies terrorism and violence, as well as virulent anti-Semitic canards, including Holocaust denial and affirming the existence of the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion’.”
- This project does not appear on GIZ’s website, reflecting a lack of transparency.

[“Strengthening Civil Society in the Palestinian Territories”](#) (2011-2016)

Local partner organizations include the Palestinian NGO Network ([PNGO](#)).

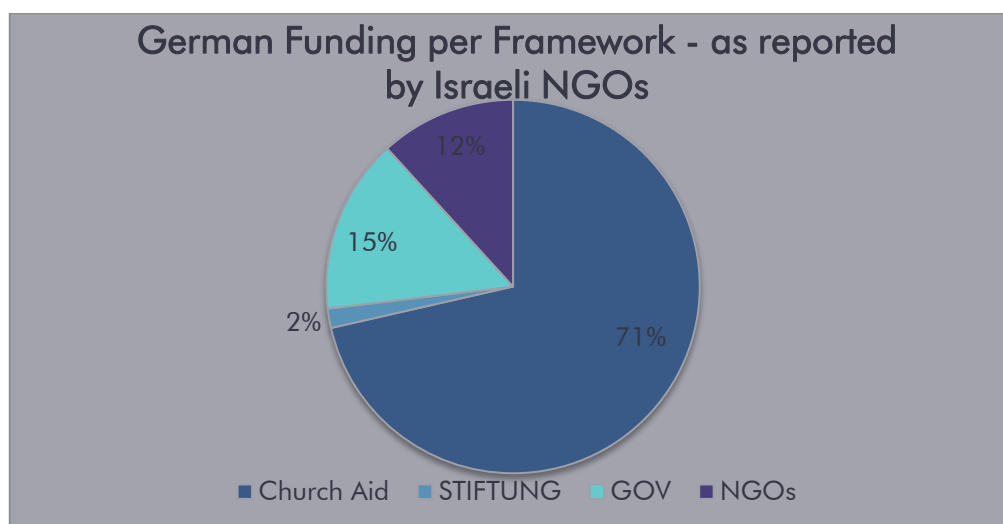
The PNGO [accuses](#) Israel of “ethnic cleansing”, of having “systematically murdered” civilians and children, [and of](#) “spreading organized terrorism which is being executed by the regular Israeli army units and terrorist groups that comprise of settlers who execute criminal acts with support and protection by the Israeli government.”

Israeli NGO [Bimkom](#) reported to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits on NIS 787,142 in funding from GIZ in 2013-2015. A project naming Bimkom as partner does not appear on GIZ’s website, reflecting a lack of transparency.

2.3. BMZ and Church Aid

[Since](#) 1962, BMZ is obligated under German law to provide financial support for the development work of church-aid organizations. Two central agencies - the Protestant and the Catholic central offices for development aid (EZE and KZE respectively) – were founded as legal frameworks for this financial support. These are run by two church organizations - the Catholic [Misereor](#) and the Protestant Development Service (EED), today merged with [Brot fuer die Welt](#) (BfW). BfW/EED is also a member of the Civil Peace Service (ZFD) (see section 2.1).

According to data from the Israeli Registrar of Non-profits, 71% of total German funding to Israeli NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict in 2012-2015 came from BfW/EED and Misereor. A detailed analysis of German church funding in the Arab-Israeli conflict was sent by NGO Monitor to BfW/EED executives in 2016, prior to its broad publication. As of the publication of this report, BfW/EED has not responded.



Examples of Misereor and BfW/EED funding to Israeli NGOs:

- [Zochrot](#) (NIS 176,290 from Misereor in 2015 [according](#) to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits) - Campaigns for a “right of return” of Palestinian refugees and their descendants; supports a “[one-state framework](#)” and the “[De-Zionization of Culture and Education](#)” as part of its vision for a “new state”.
- [Coalition of Women for Peace](#) (CWP) (NIS 120,675 from BfW/EED in 2015 [according](#) to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits) - see section 2.1.

In addition, independent research indicates German church funding to the following Palestinian organizations:

- [Palestinian Center for Human Rights](#) (PCHR) (Funded by Misereor in 2014 according to PCHR [annual report](#), amount unspecified) - Regularly describes Israel’s policies as “[apartheid](#)” and accuses Israel of “[ethnic cleansing](#),” “[war crimes](#),” and the “[Judaization of Jerusalem](#).” Refers to indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians as “resistance” and described rockets that fall short of their Israeli civilian targets and cause injuries to Palestinians as “[misuse of weapons](#).”
- [Al-Haq](#) (Funded by BfW/EED according to the latest funding information on Al-Haq’s [website](#), amount unspecified) - see section 2.1.

BfW/EED and Misereor are also part of [VENRO](#), an umbrella organization of development and humanitarian NGOs in Germany that was founded in 1995 in order to represent NGOs in the political arena and strengthen their influence in decision-making processes. As stated on its [website](#), at the time of VENRO’s creation, “NGOs wanted to be not only helpers of the south, but also a critical voice in north-south politics and to exert their influence on political decision-makers.”

VENRO has a [working group](#) (Kofinanzierung) designated for “intensive political dialogue” (translation by NGO Monitor) with BMZ, advising them on funding guidelines and selection of beneficiaries. VENRO’s current CEO, Dr. Bern Bornhorst, is head of the “politics and global issues for the future” department (PGZ) at BfW/EED. His deputy at VENRO, Dr. Klaus Seitz, is head of the political department in Misereor. As indicated by their titles, the two are responsible for political lobbying for their respective organizations.



VENRO CEO Bernd Bornhurst with Chancellor Angela Merkel and Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Gerd Mueller.

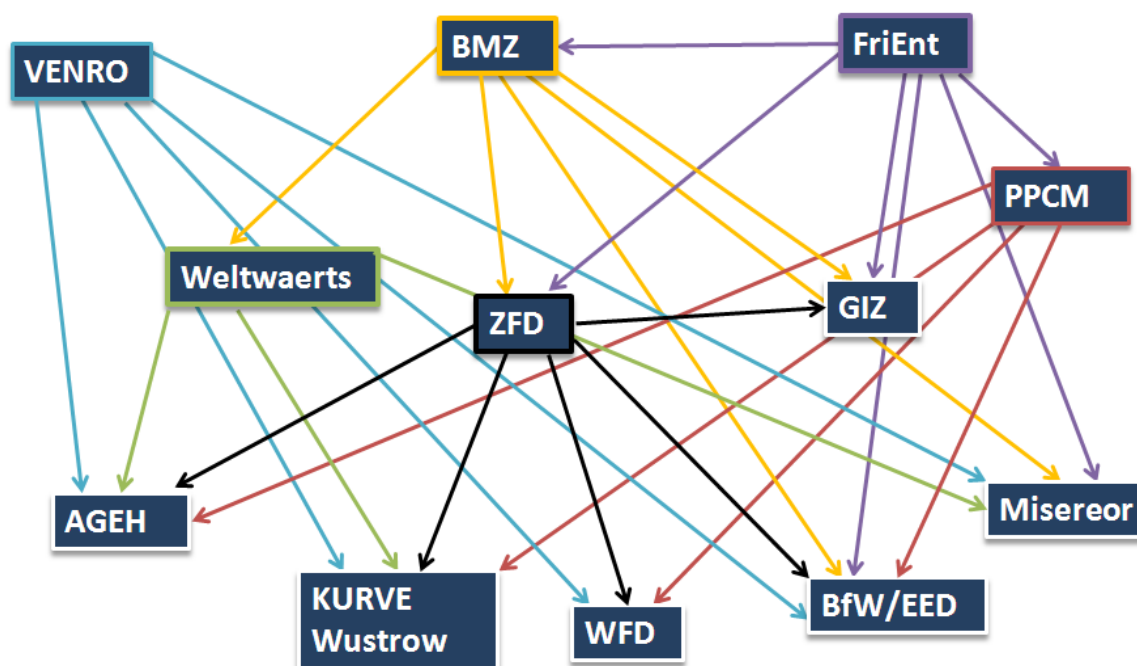
Photo credit: [VENRO](#)

2.4. BMZ Civil Society Networks

Similarly to VENRO, a network meant to represent NGO interests on decision-making levels, BMZ's multiple frameworks for the involvement of civil society each provide communication channels for NGOs through which they can promote their agendas and lobby budgetary decisions. Leading German NGOs are members of multiple federal frameworks, which amplifies their influence over decision-makers as well as their funding, further inhibits scrutiny, and narrows the input of information on the basis of which BMZ policies are formed.

A primary example is the "Working Group on Peace and Development" ([FriEnt](#)). According to its website, FriEnt's purpose is to exchange information, promote "networking and cooperation," and "build capacities." All of the above-mentioned BMZ programs and participating NGOs are members of FriEnt – its nine members include BMZ, ZFD, GIZ, BfW/EED, Misereor, the [German Platform for Peaceful Conflict Management](#) (PPCM), Heinrich Boell Stiftung, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (see section 4 for information on German political foundations). The PPCM itself is an umbrella organization of which BfW, KURVE Wustrow, Weltfriedensdienst (WFD), and AGEH are members - all of which are also members of ZFD and VENRO. Thus, there are several cases of double and triple representation in FriEnt – BfW/EED, for example, is an indirect member via PPCM and ZFD as well as being a direct member.

BMZ also has a volunteering program called [Weltwaerts](#). Weltwaerts works with a number of German "[sending organizations](#)" that are permitted to send German volunteers to take part in overseas activities with BMZ financial support. Sending organizations include Misereor, KURVE Wustrow, and AGEH.



Memberships in BMZ-related civil society networks

To conclude, BMZ frameworks involving civil society consult with and fund a select group of German NGOs and church groups that are heavily involved in federal-level decision making and enjoy considerable leeway with the funds entrusted with them. As shown above, this results in highly irresponsible funding that is detrimental to BMZ official policies and objectives.

3. CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE (FFA)

Although a much smaller player than the BMZ in quantitative terms, the Federal Foreign Office (FFA) allocates considerable funds to civil society active in the Arab-Israeli conflict, via a number of channels. Information is almost entirely unavailable, other than through reporting of Israeli NGOs to the Registrar.

In addition to direct FFA funding, reported as either “German embassy” or “German MFA” by Israeli organizations, funding is also channeled through the Institution for Foreign Relations (IFA), funded by the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg, and the municipality of Stuttgart. According to its [website](#), the IFA “is committed to peaceful and enriching coexistence between people and cultures worldwide... As a competence centre for international cultural relations, IFA connects civil societies, cultural practices, art, media and science.”

A sub-program of the IFA is [Zivik](#), meant to promote civil conflict resolution – “Civil conflict resolution workers aim to intervene as constructively and as early as possible in conflicts and in dynamics of violence, in order to achieve a de-escalation of conflict, an end to violence and to create the potential for peace work. Civil society organisations attempt to achieve non-violent conflict resolution through a broad spectrum of methods, creative strategies and specific forms of action.”

This mission statement is almost identical to that of the Civil Peace Service (ZFD) under BMZ (see section 2.1), [which](#) “supports projects aimed at **non-violent conflict resolutions** in various countries

worldwide [and] seconds experts to assist local partner organisations. Its objectives are the **prevention of violent conflicts, the reduction of violence, and the long-term securing of peace**" (emphases added). It is unclear how each of these programs correlates to the respective mandates of their overarching federal ministries, and whether any coordination between the two ministries takes place.

Zivik manifests an extreme lack of transparency. Information on its website is very limited, and vague when provided. Under "[current projects](#)," Zivik lists only one project in the West Bank and none in Israel. However, at least two Israeli NGOs reported funding from Zivik in 2012-2015 ([B'Tselem](#), [Rabbis for Human Rights](#)), and several more reported funding from the IFA ([ACRI](#), [Yesh Din](#), [Ir Amim](#)).

Funding Reported as "IFA" by Israeli NGOs:

- [Yesh Din](#) (NIS 956,808 in 2012-2013): On May 6, 2016, Yesh Din's legal advisor, Adv. Michael Sfard, [appeared](#) on behalf of the organization before the UN Security Council and presented data allegedly indicating a "lack of enforcement that enables the continuous violence against Palestinians, which is part of a long-term effort to dispossess them of their lands." This is part of Yesh Din's [broader](#) "lawfare" strategy of manipulating data about Israeli law enforcement and pressing "war crimes" cases against Israeli officials in foreign courts and in the International Criminal Court (ICC).¹

Funding Reported as "Embassy" by Israeli NGOs:

- [Human Rights Defenders Fund](#) (HRDF) (NIS 99,436 in 2015): Executive Director Alma Biblash, the fund's only documented paid employee, has referred to Israel as "[racist](#)" and "[murderous](#)," as well as a "[temporary Jewish apartheid state](#)." Biblash also supports BDS campaigns and promotes a Palestinian "right of return."

Funding Reported as "MFA" by Israeli NGOs:

- [Physicians for Human Rights-Israel](#) (PHR-I) (NIS 79,520 in 2014 [according](#) to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits): In January 2015, a [PHR-I publication](#) alleged Israeli violations of human rights and international legal norms during the 2014 Gaza War. The report does not address central issues such as the types of weapons and fighting methods used by both sides, the obstacles of asymmetric warfare, and Hamas' systematic use of the civilian population of Gaza as human shields. Instead, PHR-I's research contains fundamental methodological flaws; ignores Hamas violations and other evidence; and relies on a panel of eight "medical experts" (pg. 8), of which at least five have backgrounds in anti-Israel advocacy. (For an in-depth analysis, see NGO Monitor's [report](#).)

¹ Yesh Din claims that "85% of the investigations opened into ideologically motivated crime against Palestinians are closed due to police investigative failures." While "investigative failures" is an invented legal category unused in police statistics, [EU statistics](#) show lower indictment rates for hate crimes in a number of EU Member States, such as the Netherlands (2.3%), Finland (4.55%) and Sweden (6.23%).

4. FEDERALLY FUNDED POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS (STIFTUNGEN)

Germany's "politische Stiftungen" – political foundations – are a highly unique phenomenon, unparalleled in any other country. [According](#) to the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (BPB), these foundations were founded as a post-war reaction to the failures of the Weimar Republic, in the hopes that they would instill democratic values more deeply in the German public. Today there are six political foundations in Germany, each affiliated with a longstanding political party.

The Stiftungen are funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the FFA, and the BMZ in direct proportion to the size of the parliamentary representation of the parties affiliated with them. They are entrusted with these funds for three purposes - educating the public on democratic participation, encouraging academic achievements, and promoting democratic practices in foreign countries.

According to the BPB, "already in the early 1960's the value of the Stiftungen as foreign policy instruments was recognized by the FFA, but only in recent years is the international work of the Stiftungen increasing in importance" (translation by NGO Monitor). This is reflected in over half of the Stiftungen's current budget being provided by the BMZ for the purpose of development work.

According to a 2014 [article](#) of German newspaper *die Welt*, the Stiftungen are enjoying a steady and disproportionate increase in budget that grew by 50% since 2005, amounting to €466 million in 2014. There is considerable domestic criticism concerning the public funding of Stiftungen, with many [claiming](#) that they are in fact a means of bypassing budgetary restrictions on parliamentary parties. A number of prominent politicians and intellectuals [advocate](#) the need for a "Stiftungen law" that will impose more restrictive regulations and require more transparency. However, there is a very limited public debate in Germany as to the effect the Stiftungen have overseas – where they conduct the vast majority of their activities.

Although the overall budget of Stiftungen has increased, their funding to politicized NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict appears to have decreased, while previous funding to some of the most radical NGOs has been discontinued altogether as a result of due diligence. For example, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung discontinued its funding to Miftah (see section 2.2) after an antisemitic blood libel was published on Miftah's website. In March 2015, Michael Brochard, head of KAS Israel, [stated](#) in response to NGO Monitor research: "Since all forms of antisemitism are intolerable for us, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation has not continued the cooperation with Miftah..."

However, transparency is still severely compromised – as with most German government funding, precise amounts, and sometimes the grantees themselves are not disclosed – especially in cases of funding to Palestinian NGOs. Partnerships with NGOs promoting highly contested agendas, is still prevalent.

Because of limited transparency, complete information on funding from Stiftungen to NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict is only available in cases of funding to Israeli NGOs. The respective local offices of the Stiftungen list their partners, but do not provide funding details. The following is a list of partnerships with politicized NGOs and funding details, when available:

- Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (affiliated with CDU): [Partners](#) with the [Society of St. Yves](#). (see section 2.1)
- Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (affiliated with the Free Democratic Party): [Partners](#) with Ma'an News Agency (see section 2.2).

- Heinrich Boell Stiftung (HSL) (affiliated with the Green party):
 - [Partners](#) with the [Ma'an Development Center](#), which published "[Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions: Lessons learned in effective solidarity](#)" (2009), a guide to grassroots and international BDS campaigns. HSL published a [statement](#) of solidarity with Palestinian NGO Al-Haq, endorsing its attempt to prosecute Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Al-Haq is a leader in anti-Israel BDS and "lawfare" campaigns. The Israeli Supreme Court has [identified](#) Al-Haq's general director Shawan Jabarin as "among the senior activists of the Popular Front terrorist organization."
- Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (affiliated with Die Linke):
 - Funds Zochrot (NIS 161,674 in 2013-2014) – Campaigns for a "right of return" of Palestinian refugees and their descendants; supports a "[one-state framework](#)" and the "[De-Zionization of Culture and Education](#)" as part of its vision for a "new state".
 - [Partners](#) with [Applied Research Institute Jerusalem](#) (ARIJ). ARIJ supports anti-Israel BDS and accuses Israel of "apartheid" and "racism," and supports a Palestinian "right of return." In its publications employs [rhetoric](#) of "ethnic cleansing," "transfer," "land grab," and "colonialization activities" and [claims](#) Israel is guilty of "excessive and disproportionate violations of every existing humanitarian code."
 - [Partners](#) with Bisan Center for Research and Development, a [signatory](#) to the Support Statement of Palestinian Feminists in Palestine and Diaspora published in February 2016, which accuses Israel of "colonial and racist oppression" and endorses international BDS campaigns, naming them the most "effective" in "the struggle of our people for freedom, justice and equality."

5. FEDERALLY FUNDED INDEPENDENT FOUNDATIONS AND NGOS

Germany has a longstanding tradition of granting public financial support to independent organizations, as well as to several quasi-governmental organizations that implement government policies, but are managed independently. These practices further blur the line between direct and indirect government funding in Germany.

Several grantees are well-established, independent NGOs that take part, as shown above, in government programs and initiatives in addition to receiving public grants for their own activities. Aside from nurturing partnerships with highly politicized local NGOs, these organizations engage themselves in political activities.

EVZ

The quasi-governmental foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" ([EVZ](#)) is jointly financed by the German government and German industry, and was founded in order to provide for individual humanitarian payments to victims of National Socialism (These were completed in 2007). Currently EVZ supports [international programs and projects](#) in the fields of critical examination of history, human rights, and the victims of National Socialism.

EVZ has funded highly troubling activities. In 2010-2011, EVZ funded, as part of its program [Europeans for Peace](#) (EFP), an exchange program titled "Human Rights – Rights of Occupation" with German (Anne Frank School in Gütersloh) and Palestinian (School of Hope in Ramallah)

students. Rather than focusing on Holocaust education, during the program some of the Palestinian participants questioned "[whether the Holocaust had really happened to that extent](#)," and the main emphasis was devoted to alleging Israeli violations and immorality (for more information, see NGO Monitor [report](#)).

However, EVZ funding for politicized activities and NGOs appears to have ceased, although limited transparency hinders public scrutiny. In 2012, EVZ practiced due diligence and decided to [discontinue](#) funding to Zochrot, an Israeli NGO that promotes a Palestinian "right of return" and advocates for a "dezionized" state. EVZ justified its decision on the grounds that "EVZ supports educational projects but does not support organizations that also have a political agenda... Since Zochrot supports the right of return, the foundation cannot extend its cooperation with it."

KURVE Wustrow

The NGO KURVE Wustrow runs a project aimed at "strengthening nonviolent initiatives" in partnership with PSCC, a Palestinian organization linked to demonstrations in the West Bank that often turn violent. This project is part of the federally funded BMZ program Civil Peace Service (ZFD) (see section 2.1). According to its website, "The Centre for Training and Networking in Nonviolent Action – KURVE Wustrow is a non-profit association funded by its members." However, according to their 2014 [annual report](#), in 2013 and 2014 roughly 80% of its budget came from government grants.

In November 2015, KURVE Wustrow published a [statement](#) condemning the "attacks of the Israeli army and settlers on our civil peace service [ZFD] partners in Palestine." The statement fails to mention Palestinian terror attacks against Israeli civilians, occurring on a daily basis at the time of publication: "We are witnessing with great concern the current wave of violence in Palestine and Israel. Especially worrying is the unjustified and disproportional usage of violence by the Israeli army against the Palestinian population, as well as the attack against our Palestinian cooperation partners Youth Against Settlements (YAS) and Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC)." The term "violent attacks," recurrent in the statement, refers to arrests and detainments of two Palestinian members of these organizations for their alleged involvement in terror activities. NGO Monitor has contacted KURVE Wustrow requesting to share information on the involvement in violent activities of its partner. The organization has not responded to date.

Welfriedensdienst (WFD)

Another ZFD member NGO, Welfriedensdienst (WFD), also engages in blatantly political activities. In November 2013, WFD honorable board member Helge Loew signed, using the name of the organization, a [petition](#) to boycott the Jewish National Fund (JNF), falsely claiming that "Israeli government occupation policies... represent the longest period of occupation in world history," and accusing Israel of "ethnic cleansing," "the Judaization of the earth," and "illegal and racist policies." According to its [annual report](#), 81% of WFD's 2014 budget came from government grants.

Medico International

Yet another prominent German NGO highly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict is [Medico International](#) (MI). According to its 2014 [annual report](#), over 40% of MI's budget came from public grants. According to their [website](#), Medico International's project funding for 2014 in Israel and the Palestinian Territories included support from the Federal Foreign Office and BMZ. MI's 2014 [annual report](#) claims Israel's operation in Gaza in 2014 "is just one element in a strategy to shatter all hope for the people in Gaza."

Examples of Medico International funding:

- [Physicians for Human Rights-Israel](#) (PHR-I) (According to NIS 360,870 in 2013-2015): see section 3
- [Coalition of Women for Peace](#) (CWP) (NIS 97,031 in 2012-2013 [according](#) to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits): see section 2.1
- [Who Profits](#) (NIS 110,447 in 2014-2015, [according](#) to the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits): [Founded](#) “in response to the Palestinian call for [boycott, divestment and sanctions \(BDS\)](#) movement” against Israel. Maintains a BDS database targeting Israeli companies.
- [Al-Mezan](#) (listed as partner on MI’s website and annual report, precise amounts unavailable): Accuses Israel of “[massacres](#),” “[slaughtering civilians](#),” “[scandalous war crimes](#),” and “[despicable disregard to civilian life](#).” Signatory to the 2005 “[Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS](#).” Highly active in [anti-Israel lawfare campaigns](#), exploiting courts, and international legal bodies to seek arrest warrants against Israeli government officials, file lawsuits against companies and governments doing business with Israel, and lobby for cases against Israelis at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

6. FEDERALLY COMMISSIONED EVALUATIONS

The German federal government commissions independent evaluations for the various programs and projects it supports. However, these are either conducted infrequently or not made publicly available, and tend to be very broad in scope and thus cannot uncover failings at the local implementation level.

While BMZ [publishes](#) evaluation reports on its website, the latest available are from 2011, and no country specific, let alone project specific, reports are available. A search for evaluation reports of the IFA’s Zivik program (see section 3) yields only a [select](#) few, dating no later than 2009. GIZ has a relatively extensive [list](#) of project evaluations, none of which cover any of the projects mentioned in this report (see section 2.2). Finally, the [German Institute for Development Evaluation](#) (DEval) conducts independent evaluations of “German development cooperation interventions” on behalf of “the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and its implementing organisations as well as non-governmental bodies.” Under “publications,” DEval [lists](#) only a limited number of reports, none of which evaluates specific projects.

One publicly available [evaluation](#) covers ZFD projects in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza in 2009-2011. Although none of the projects reviewed here is running during the timeframe covered by the evaluation, it appears to have greatly impacted decision-makers. The evaluation report strongly recommends the PSCC as a local partner organization on a number of occasions, arguing that “CPS [=ZFD] local partners and CPS executing agencies could work on the conflict by supporting already existing structures, such as the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC). Thus, they would bring Israeli and the Palestinian actors together and involve them in joint peaceful demonstrations and non-violent actions.” (p. 57-58).

In addition to recommending an organization linked to violence as a local partner, the evaluation is revealed, upon close inspection, to be severely biased. The report portrays Israel as a “militarised society” alien to the concept of nonviolence, while making no such allegations regarding Palestinian society (p.26); accuses the Israeli population of perpetuating the Holocaust to “cultivate the feeling

of being persecuted and not accepted by the Arab neighbours since the establishment of the Israeli state” as a justification of “aggressive policies towards the Palestinians” (p.31); and claims that “It is difficult to assess, in fact, for three generations of Israelis at least, what the consequences will be – if and when a peace agreement will be reached – of massive human rights violations in the occupied territories for the Jewish citizens who have been regularly serving in the national militia army” (p.66).

The report also questions Israeli democracy, relying on the allegations of “several observers” of “institutional discrimination against minorities (Palestinian citizens of Israel in particular), military involvement in government affairs, presence of influential anti-democratic ultra-religious groups, breaches of press freedom and human rights violations” (p.14). Finally, the report recommends a reassessment of German foreign policy towards Israel, on account of its being “incoherent:” “On the one hand, the German government supports the occupier country Israel and, on the other hand, advocates nonviolent conflict resolution with Israeli and Palestinian civil societies through the CPS projects” (p. xiv in introduction).

The evaluation was conducted by a Swiss-based anthropology professor, Riccardo Bocco. At roughly the same time the report was published, in an April 2011 interview for [Swissinfo](#), Bocco equated the Israeli government with Hamas, accusing it of “state terrorism targeting the Palestinian civilian population;” questioned whether democracy “really exists in Israel;” and argued against boycotting Hamas, claiming that “this just sends a message to al-Qaida and other extremist groups that following the path of democracy to achieve power gets you nowhere.”

In 2014, Bocco [claimed](#) that “The killing of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip during Operation Protective Edge had a clear economic motive – the Israeli security industries are the ones who prospered from Protective Edge.” According to Bocco, Israeli security industries used the anti-terror 2014 Gaza conflict as a field experiment to reap billions in profit.

As early as 2008, Bocco [participated](#) in a number of events organized by [Collectif Urgence Palestine](#) (CUP), a Geneva-based BDS group, calling for a right of return. In 2015, he was head speaker at a CUP conference titled “Exodus and expulsions: the endless tragedy of the Palestinian refugees.” CUP [promotes](#) a Nakba narrative, [accuses Israel](#) of torturing Palestinian youth, and [advocates](#) for economic and cultural boycott of Israel. Bocco also wrote a [Foreword](#) for a publication by [Badil](#), a member of the CUP network. Badil is a Palestinian NGO that promotes BDS and a “right of return,” and has [awarded prizes](#) to blatantly antisemitic cartoons.

CONCLUSION

A BMZ [publication](#) from 2009 about “Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability” in state-society relations notes: “It cannot be assumed that civil society organisations are oriented towards democracy and reform per se, nor that they represent (broad) interests in society. Organisations may even be part of the clientelism of a country’s elite. Therefore, when promoting civil society forces it is important to conduct a thorough analysis of those involved and to monitor any transformation processes of the partners” (p. 25, parentheses in original).

Despite this, German foundations, NGOs, and church aid organizations are given astounding leeway in the management of public funds, reallocating them as they see fit. As amply shown above, this results in funding to precisely those organizations that are not oriented towards democracy and do not represent broad interests, as well as to organizations that are hostile to German values and policies. This is the result of a system that entrusts funding and decision making to civil society, without imposing on it any scrutiny and while maintaining its complete independence. Although this is grounded in a genuine aspiration to instill democratic values, it inevitably results in severely compromised transparency and misuse of funds.

Although these cases represent only a small fraction of German federal funding to civil society, their implications are disproportionately amplified. Rather than just funding, the fringe, radical organizations reviewed above benefit from the moral stamp of approval and public legitimacy of one of the world’s greatest democracies, exploiting it to great effect in order to distort public discourse and to hinder reconciliation and dialogue.

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NGO Monitor's mission is to provide information and analysis, promote accountability, and support discussion on the reports and activities of NGOs claiming to advance human rights and humanitarian agendas.

NGO Monitor is a project of the Institute for NGO Research (R.A. 580465508)
Organization in Special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2013.
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