

Copenhagen, 29 May 2017

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
Asiatisk Plads 2, 1448 Copenhagen
Denmark

NGO Monitor
10 Yad Harutzim St.
Jerusalem, Israel 9342148

To NGO Monitor

I have been asked to respond to your open letter of 21 May to Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen.

With regard to Denmark's engagement with Palestine following the Oslo accords in 1993 and 1995, the general approach has been the following:

The Danish development engagement, together with that of likeminded donors, has from the outset consistently focused on support for state-building, including at the local level, and on promoting human rights. In addition, the international community continues to provide long term humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian refugees - which constitute a bigger group than the Palestinian non-refugee population - especially through UNRWA.

The Danish engagement in Palestine, and with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, aims to improve the livelihood and security of Palestinians as well as Israelis. But the increased threat from extremist, militant groups in parts of the Arab/Muslim world makes the need for progress on the Middle East peace process all the more urgent as the unresolved conflict is used as a recruitment tool in the propaganda of such groups.

More specifically with regard to the human rights element Denmark supports Palestinian and Israeli civil society organisations (CSO) to monitor and document human rights and international humanitarian law (HR/IHL) violations pertaining to Palestinians and to influence the behaviour, policies and practices of duty bearers to be more in line with their HR/IHL commitments and good governance standards. The engagement will fund the second phase of the activity (2017-2020). The Danish support is part of a donor consortium fund, consisting of Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

The fund is presently managed by the HR/IHL Secretariat, established especially for the purpose under the auspices of the consultancy firm NIRAS and the Birzeit University's Institute of Law. By pooling resources and providing core funding to selected grantees, the donors aim to reduce fragmentation of funding and duplication of support, alleviate the administrative burden on partners, and free up resources for a more strategic and qualitative dialogue with duty bearers. Grantees are selected based on themes, their strategic and organisational capacity to implement, monitor and report their own work according to a

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fixed set of criteria. The Secretariat, moreover, offers capacity development support to these organisations and facilitates policy dialogue among CSOs, donors and duty bearers.

The donors jointly maintain a continuous dialogue with the HR/IHL Secretariat as well as they conduct separate meetings and conferences with relevant HR/IHL CSOs on challenges to the sector. A Steering Committee oversees the work of the Secretariat and monitors and evaluates the results.

In 2016, a mid-term review to assess the overall functioning of the setup was undertaken. Based on the findings of the review, the donors will consider possible new thematic priorities, in addition to the present focus on HR/IHL CSOs in Palestine and Israel. In the negotiations over the final design of the support, Denmark will in cooperation with the other donors - based on recommendation of the evaluation - seek to reduce the number of core funded CSOs from 24 to 10-15. Credible documentation of grantees having acted against the guidelines signed in the cooperation agreement with the Secretariat will be a factor in this process.

Following the Palestinian ratification of international treaties on HR/IHL, partner organisations now have access to new and effective tools for advocacy and policy dialogue. This will enable a stronger focus on the human rights performance of the PA and de facto Gaza government in the next phase. It is likely that the support to HR/IHL CSOs in Israel and Palestine will be complemented by support to CSOs working on social accountability and good governance monitoring.

Sincerely yours



Jens-Otto Horslund
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