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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Amuta for NGO Responsibility, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 May 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Sweden Must Stop Funding Antisemitism, BDS, Rejectionism, Terror Affiliates

Sweden provides significant funding for politicized NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Several of these NGOs promote antisemitism, rejectionism, and Israel denialism. They engage in political warfare against the State of Israel, including supporting delegitimization, BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions), and lawfare campaigns. Many of these organizations also have alleged ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist organization, designated as such by the EU, US, Canada, and Israel.

Sweden and the Human Rights & International Humanitarian Law Secretariat:

The primary mechanism through which Sweden provides funding to NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict is the Human Rights & International Humanitarian Law Secretariat (Secretariat), a donor consortium of the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, and Denmark managed by the Institute of Law at Birzeit University (“IoL-BZU”) in Ramallah. This NGO framework, with a projected budget of \$17.6 million between 2013-2017, plays a central role in promoting the activities of terror-affiliated NGOs, as well as antisemitism and discriminatory BDS campaigns. Sweden has provided \$6.1 million to the Secretariat for the period of 2013-2017.

The Secretariat transfers millions of dollars to discriminatory BDS groups. In many instances, this funding is in direct contradiction to the foreign policies of the donor consortium countries (including Sweden), which explicitly oppose BDS efforts. Of the 24 core funding recipients, 13 support BDS. The 13 pro-BDS NGOs receive \$5.78 million from the Secretariat. Another 15 out of the 34 NGOs that receive project funding support BDS; these groups received over \$1.2 million in 2014-2015.

NGOs funded by the Secretariat include Addameer (Secretariat core funding: \$325,000), which campaigns in support of Palestinians convicted of and imprisoned for terror offenses. Addameer is a PFLP “affiliate.” The NGO’s chairperson and co-founder, Abdul-latif Ghaith, was banned by Israel from travelling internationally due to his alleged membership in the PFLP; he was also banned from entering the West Bank from 2011 to 2015. Addameer’s vice-chairperson Khalida Jarrar, board member Yousef Habash, researcher Ayman Nasser, documentation officer Sumoud Saadar, and treasurer Suha Al Bargouti all additionally have ties to the PFLP.

Another Secretariat-funded NGO, BADIL (Secretariat core funding \$370,000), promotes a Palestinian “right of return,” uses “resistance” rhetoric, and is a leader of discriminatory BDS campaigns. BADIL holds annual “right of return contests” and has published virulently antisemitic cartoons, as well as propagandistic imagery promoting violence and the elimination of Israel. One image depicted a Hasidic Jew with a hooked nose and side locks, standing on a concrete block emblazoned 1948 crushing a child and surrounded by skulls. In his hand a pitchfork shaped as a menorah dripping with blood. In 2015, BADIL published a cartoon depicting a tsunami of keys destroying a “negotiation table” and drowning two people, one of whom is wearing a kippah with a

Jewish star on it. Another 2015 cartoon shows a clenched fist rising up through a map of Israel with the caption reading “Return is our Right and our Destiny.”

Also funded by the Secretariat is (\$710,000 from 2014-16) the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counseling. One of its employees, Manal Tamimi, has promoted terrorism, violence, and virulent antisemitism on social media. Far from condemning her actions, WCLAC filed a complaint with the United Nations over the “Frequent targeting of Palestinian human rights defender: Mrs. Manal Tamimi.” As a result of her egregious social media activity, Tamimi was removed from the March 2017 report prepared by Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk, which originally misidentified her as a “human rights defender”.

Swedish Government Funding to Politicized NGOs

In addition to the Human Rights & International Humanitarian Law Secretariat, the Swedish government funds numerous Israeli and Palestinian NGOs through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Embassy in Tel Aviv, the Representative Office in Ramallah, and indirectly by outsourcing to Swedish church groups and aid organizations such as Diakonia. In 2015, Sweden provided at least \$16.1 million to NGOs involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Organizations receiving Swedish funding lead campaigns and political activities that are inconsistent with Sweden’s policies to promote peace and a two-state framework in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some groups have also used antisemitic rhetoric and have apparent links to terror organizations, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Sweden’s Abuse of Universal Human Rights

Sweden was the only Western country to vote in favor of a May 2, 2017 discriminatory UNESCO resolution that grossly distorts the history of Jerusalem and Israel, and is aimed at denying Jewish historical and religious ties to the Middle East, in particular in the Old City of Jerusalem. Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom defended her country’s move, despite it not being in solidarity with the rest of the EU.

Additionally, Sweden refused to disclose its vote on Saudi Arabia’s election to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Foreign Minister Wallstrom, however, defended the absurd election of one of the worst abusers of women’s rights to the Commission, stating that Saudi Arabia it is a place where they can “learn something about women.”

Within Sweden itself, a Jewish center in Umea was forced to close in April due to antisemitic threats and the building being vandalized. It is unclear what measures the government took in response and to combat rising antisemitism in the country.

Recommendations:

- Address the issue of Sweden’s funding to NGOs promoting antisemitism and that are linked to terrorist organizations, including an independent investigation.
- Demand that Sweden immediately end such funding.

- Recommend Sweden enact legislation prohibiting future funding and other support to NGOs that promote antisemitism and/or that are linked to terrorist organizations.
 - Enact measures to combat rising antisemitism in Sweden.
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