



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

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*Submission to the UN Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference*

NGO Monitor hereby presents this submission to the [UN Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference](#) (“Prepcom”) in advance of its organizational review session on 27-31 August 2007. Our submission presents a detailed analysis of the distortions and conflict-enhancing impacts that result from the involvement of politicized NGOs in such activities. Although these NGOs claim to promote universal human rights, the record shows that in reality, they advance biased agendas based on a highly distorted narrative that exploit and undermine international law. Several of these NGOs, including [PNGO](#), [Miftah](#), [Ittijah](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and [Amnesty International](#) played an active role in the NGO Forum of the [2001 Durban Conference](#) and preparatory meeting in Iran. 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.

Given the impact of the Prepcom’s reports and activities, it is important that they be credible, accurate and impartial. NGO Monitor’s systematic and detailed analyses demonstrate that the submissions of political NGOs regarding alleged discriminatory practices and other human rights issues lack credibility in the context of conflicts involving terrorism and warfare. The obsessive condemnations of Israeli responses to Hezbollah attacks during the 2006 conflict, and the clear inaccuracies and reliance on unverifiable sources in the numerous reports issued by NGOs, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, further highlights this issue. We also note a [recent study](#) conducted by the Conflict Analysis Resource Center in Colombia, shows the lack of reliability of NGO reporting (HRW and Amnesty) in this conflict. On this basis, we urge the Prepcom to carefully examine the credibility and biases resulting from the participation of political NGOs in order to avoid a repetition of the results of the 2001 Durban conference.

NGO Monitor’s submission is organized as follows:

- I. NGO Monitor’s Mission Statement
- II. The “NGO Information Chain”
- III. The NGO Forum of the Durban Conference and the “Durban Strategy”
- IV. NGO Implementation of the Durban Strategy (detailed analysis of specific NGOs)
- V. Conclusion and Recommendations

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cc: The Honorable Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights



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## NGO MONITOR'S SUBMISSION TO THE UN PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE

### I. NGO MONITOR MISSION STATEMENT

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often provide valuable humanitarian assistance, including health services, education, and other basic requirements under many different and complex conditions. They can also play a beneficial role in developing civil society, democracy, environmental protection, and human rights. In many areas around the world in which governments fail or unable to fulfill their obligations, NGOs are able to step forward. And in midst of violent conflict, NGOs can promote dialogue, the principles of non-violence, tolerance, and reconciliation.

Unfortunately, however, NGO activity conducted in the name of "civil society" can become counterproductive – particularly in an environment of intense conflict or ethnic strife.<sup>1</sup> In these cases, NGOs and their leaders actually can become part of the problem, and even serve to exacerbate conflict. This negative role is particularly evident in the Arab-Israeli conflict. NGOs have become extremely powerful and influential, particularly with respect to the realm of human rights and international law. Their reports, protests and lobbying activities have a dominant impact in shaping global attitudes and terms of reference. Until recently, however, these NGOs, have not themselves been subject to independent and critical analysis. NGO Monitor was founded to promote accountability, and advance a vigorous discussion on NGO reports and activities.

Unlike democratically elected governments or publicly traded companies, no systematic framework exists for holding NGOs to rigorous standards of credibility and accountability for the statements and reports they produce. Under the "halo effect", NGOs that claim to pursue "universal human rights" enjoy immunity from detailed scrutiny or criticism. The vast resources at their disposal allows for large staffs which produce an immense volume of reports, press releases and media interviews, turning them into primary sources for journalists, researchers, and government policy makers. The amplifying effect of these public pronouncements has often framed the terms of public discourse and strongly influences the crafting of policy. As David Rieff has written in the *New York Times*, human rights NGOs lack democratic legitimacy. "Human rights workers sometimes talk of their movement as an emblem of grassroots democracy. Yet it is possible to view it as an undemocratic pressure group, accountable to no one but its own members and donors, that wields enormous power and influence."<sup>2</sup>

As NGO Monitor and others have documented, established human rights NGOs often produce reports and launch campaigns that stand in sharp contradiction to their own mission statements claiming to uphold universal human rights values. They regularly obscure or remove the context of terrorism, provide false or incomplete information, statistics and images, and disseminate gross distortions of the humanitarian and human rights dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald M. Steinberg, "Civil Society, Intercultural Dialogue and Political Activism: Rethinking EMP Policies", in *Intercultural Dialogue and Civilization: Translating Values into Actions* edited by Leonce Bekemans et al, Marsilio: Venice, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Rieff, David "The Precarious Triumph of Human Rights", *New York Times Magazine*, August 8, 1999.

As a result, the aim of NGO Monitor is to foster transparency and critical dialogue regarding NGO political agendas and the credibility of their reports.

## II. "THE NGO INFORMATION CHAIN"

International NGOs, like many news agencies, tend to concentrate on conflict areas where information is plentiful and readily accessible. In this "information chain" it is important to distinguish between international and local NGOs. International NGOs include [Amnesty International](#),<sup>3</sup> [Oxfam](#)<sup>4</sup> and [Human Rights Watch](#).<sup>5</sup> Although they have small on-the-ground teams, most of their information is garnered from other sources, including local NGOs and "eyewitnesses", who may be directly involved in the conflict. The information is then packaged in press releases and disseminated through reports, emails, and internet postings. Examples of local political NGOs in the Palestinian Authority (PA) include [Miftah](#),<sup>6</sup> [Palestinian Center for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#),<sup>7</sup> [Physicians for Human Rights—Israel \(PHR-I\)](#),<sup>8</sup> [B'tselem](#),<sup>9</sup> [Al-Haq](#),<sup>10</sup> [Adalah](#),<sup>11</sup> and [LAW](#).<sup>12</sup> The relationship between these two dimensions of the NGO network is a major factor in how human rights issues are reported across the world.

Local NGOs often advocate agendas that reflect only one side of the conflict. Mary Anderson terms this phenomenon, "mandate blinders,"<sup>13</sup> manifested when NGOs erase the complex context. For example, as demonstrated in many NGO Monitor analyses, the [Palestinian NGO Network \(PNGO\)](#)<sup>14</sup> consistently promotes a one-sided perspective which focus on the impact of Israeli security measures on the Palestinian population, while removing terror, corruption, and other causes of the Palestinian situation.

The larger and more powerful international NGOs then adopt and amplify this material from "grassroots" sources. Even in cases where international NGOs send in their own teams, they usually lack the necessary language and access to work independently. Instead, they rely on local partners to show them around and to "find" the right people to "confirm" particular versions of events. Mary Anderson points out how foreign aid workers can become unwittingly intertwined with the very forces that drive conflicts. Many of those engaged in aid work in the Palestinian territories include in their definition of aid blocking the path of tanks, using their bodies to prevent house demolitions and turning themselves into human shields. Foreign passports become a form of shield in the belief that no soldier will attack for fear of media and diplomatic repercussions. This has led to several tragic incidents.<sup>15</sup> NGOs also become so committed

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#amnesty>

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#oxfam>

<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/human\\_rights\\_watch\\_hr\\_w](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/human_rights_watch_hr_w)

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#miftah>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#pchr>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#physicians>

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#Betsalem>

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#al-haq>

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#adalah>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#law>

<sup>13</sup> Mary B. Anderson, "Humanitarian NGOs in Conflict Intervention", in *Managing Global Chaos*, eds. Chester Crocker, Fen Hampson and Pamela Aall, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996) at 343-4

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#pngo>

<sup>15</sup> One example is the tragic death of Rachel Corrie, an American aid worker who placed herself in front of a bulldozer during a complex security operation related to a Palestinian suicide bomber.

to “predetermined conclusions” that fit their agendas that “[they] refuse[] to let the facts, as reported by objective sources, get in [their] way.”<sup>16</sup>

*Prime facie*, the interventions of human rights and humanitarian NGOs help establish common ground and facilitate dialogue. However, in contrast to their apolitical declarations, there is an increasing phenomenon of exploiting international development assistance to serve strongly political interests. This has generated negative outcomes and has even served to contribute to violence.

Using their enormous power and influence, the NGO network is able to impose narrow perceptions and ideologies on the international diplomatic and journalistic communities, particularly with respect to their interpretations of international law. Instead of the conflict resolution process that humanitarian relief NGOs claim to be supplying, they often become parties to the disputes, and actually exacerbate tension and violence.

In summarizing a major conference on the role of NGOs held by the US Institute for Peace in December 1994, Pamela Aall notes that the international community has ceded a great deal of power and authority to NGOs in restoring civil society and building peace during and after conflict. However, she also warns that this power can be used to affect the course of the conflicts themselves. As a result, “their work in relief and development affects not only the social and economic well-being of their target groups, but also the larger political situation.”<sup>17</sup> The role of NGOs in enhancing the Arab-Israeli conflict has been documented in detail by Gerald Steinberg and NGO Monitor.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the study conducted by the Conflict Analysis Resource Center<sup>19</sup> in Colombia highlights the lack of credibility in NGO reporting (HRW and Amnesty) in this conflict, and the systematic bias.

### III. The NGO Forum of the Durban Conference and the ‘Durban Strategy’

The United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (UNWCAR) (hereafter the “Durban Conference”) marked a major turning point in the role and impact of the NGO community in the political campaign to delegitimize Israel. The Durban conference revived the notorious 1975 UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 that referred to Zionism as “racism” (and which was repealed in 1991.) The conference consisted of three frameworks – the diplomatic proceedings, a youth group and the NGO Forum, which was the most damaging to human rights. At the NGO Forum, speakers and activists representing at least 1500 participating NGOs, including global “superpowers” such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, as well as Palestinian, European and South African groups, largely ignored the issues for which the conference was ostensibly called, focusing instead on branding Israel an “apartheid regime”. The final declaration adopted by NGO participants declared Israel’s anti-terror efforts to be “war crimes” and “violations of international

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<sup>16</sup> Allan Dershowitz, “First Word: What is Human Rights Watch Watching?” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 24, 2006, available at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?apage=1&cid=1154525938961&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>. See also Joshua Muravchik, “Human Rights Watch vs. Human Rights,” *The Weekly Standard*, September 11, 2006, Volume 011, Issue 48, available at, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/649efeoasp>, for a history of how an NGO’s agenda can interfere with its reporting honestly on human rights issues.

<sup>17</sup> Pamela Aall, “Nongovernmental Organizations and Peacemaking,” in *Managing Global Chaos*, eds. Chester Crocker, Fen Hampson and Pamela Aall, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996) at 436.

<sup>18</sup> Gerald M. Steinberg, “Soft Powers Play Hardball: NGOs Wage War against Israel”, *Israel Affairs*, 12:4 October 2006

<sup>19</sup> Andres Ballesteros, Jorge A. Restrepo, Michael Spagat, and Juan F. Vargas, “The Work of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch: Evidence from Colombia”, University of London, 2007

law”, and restored the notorious “Zionism is racism” theme a decade after the original version had been repealed by the UN General Assembly in 1991.<sup>20</sup>

The Durban Conference took place against the backdrop of the failed Oslo peace process, and Palestinian terror attacks and suicide bombings in Israeli cities. The language used by the NGO community provided "soft power" justification for Palestinian violence while condemning Israeli self-defense as a systematic violation of human rights and international law. The strategy of isolation and boycott adopted in the NGO Forum's final declaration was seen by many as advancing the goal of eliminating Israel as a nation-state.

In order to understand the political power of the NGO community in the framework of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is necessary to examine its role in the process that began at Durban. This "Durban Strategy" extends from the NGOs' activities during the conference itself, to the implementation of it in NGO campaigns intended to internationally isolate and demonize Israel.

#### A. Pre-Conference Planning and Organization

The meeting of the preparatory committee (prepcom) in Tehran from February 19-21, 2001 under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) marked a major step toward the hijacking of the conference process for demonization of Israel. Despite assurances from UNHRC and Mary Robinson, in particular, the Iranian government refused to grant visas to Israeli and Jewish representatives. Notwithstanding the conference's lofty affirmation that “human rights are universal, indivisible, inalienable, irrespective of... race, national or ethnic identity,”<sup>21</sup> Jews and Israelis were excluded.

Officials from radical Palestinian NGOs and their international allies dominated the agenda-setting process in Tehran. The Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), an umbrella group of more than 90 Palestinian NGOs, and the Palestinian Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, known as LAW, took lead roles. Members of LAW served on the steering committee, led workshops and sessions during the conference itself, and even organized a pre-conference visit to the Palestinian Authority for the South African delegation.<sup>22</sup> Officials from PNGO and its member groups played key role in drafting the resolution referring to Israel as an "apartheid state" and calling for sanctions and international isolation. As a result, instead of providing a platform to redress racism in all its forms, from slavery in Africa to the caste system in South Asia, the preparations for the Durban conference focused largely on turning Israel into a pariah state – the "new South Africa". PNGO made numerous inflammatory statements including that the State of Israel "represents the completion of an apartheid system that by far exceeds the darkest times of South Africa, aiming at the complete demise of our people"<sup>23</sup> and that economic cooperative ventures between Israelis and Palestinians are "the project of enslaving the Palestinian people."

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<sup>20</sup> Gerald M. Steinberg, "The Centrality of NGOs in the Durban Strategy," *Yale Israel Journal*, Summer 2006; David Matas. *Aftershock: Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2005; Kenneth S. Stern, "Durban: Antisemitism as Antiracism", in *Antisemitism Today*, American Jewish Committee, New York, 2006

<sup>21</sup> "Declaration of the Asia Pacific NGO Forum in Teheran, Iran," Human Rights Internet February 17-18, 2001 <<http://www.hri.ca/racism/meetings/teheran.shtml>>

<sup>22</sup> Black, Edwin. "Anti-Israel activists at Durban were funded by Ford Foundation." *Jewish Telegraphic Agency News* October 16, 2001 <<http://www.jta.org/story.asp?id=031015-FORD1>>

<sup>23</sup> Juma, Jamal. "Trapped Like Mice." *Palestine Monitor* January 21, 2005 <<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/726/re2.htm>> About Us, *Palestine Monitor* <[http://www.palestinemonitor.org/nueva\\_web/about\\_us/about\\_us.htm](http://www.palestinemonitor.org/nueva_web/about_us/about_us.htm)>



## B. The Conference on Racism Becomes a Racist Conference

An estimated 7,000 delegates from more than 1,500 NGOs participated in the three-day event at Durban, claiming to represent the “voices of the victims”<sup>24</sup> of racism, discrimination and xenophobia. The large attendance and funding from the Ford Foundation and various governments made the NGO Forum the central focus of the entire Durban conference. This also reflected the dominant ideology that viewed NGOs and civil society as “authentic” voices and representatives, in contrast to those of government officials and elected representatives in democratic societies.

When the NGO delegates convened on August 28, 2001, the focus had narrowed primarily to attacks against Israel. The diplomatic and youth frameworks were not unaffected by the direction set in Tehran: the US and Israeli official delegations walked out of the government sessions in protest at the language of incitement directed against Israel, and while the Canadian and European officials remained, they issued strong protests regarding their forum's final statement.<sup>25</sup> But by then, the much larger and more influential NGO Forum had already completed its activities and issued a closing declaration.

The NGO Forum built upon the anti-Israel foundation established at the Tehran prepcom. NGO participants singled out Israel for attack. A large contingent wore T-shirts with the words “Occupation = Colonialism = Racism, End Israeli Apartheid.” Palestinian NGOs distributed copies of the anti-Semitic forgery, “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, and leaflets depicting Hitler and the caption, “What if I had won?” The answer: “There would be No Israel and No Palestinian bloodshed.”<sup>26</sup>

Speakers at the NGO Forum focused on the theme of Israel as a singular human rights violator, stripping away the context of the conflict, Arab rejectionism and mass terror. Hanan Ashrawi, a prominent Palestinian official who also heads the NGO known as MIFTAH<sup>27</sup> repeated this rhetoric: “The Palestinians today continue to be subject to multiple forms and expressions of racism, exclusion, oppression, colonialism, apartheid, and national denial.”<sup>28</sup>

A session entitled “Hate Crime and Hate Groups, Ethnic Cleansing, and Genocide” focused on victims from Sudan, India and primarily the Palestinian Authority. South African activists, including local

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<sup>24</sup> “World conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,” Human Rights Internet February 17-18, 2001 <<http://www.hri.ca/racism/meetings/teheran.shtml>>

Statement by Mary Robinson, High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary-General of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Plenary meeting of the World Conference September 4, 2002 <<http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/0/81BEC2394E67B11141256ABD004D9648?opendocument>>

<sup>25</sup> Klusener, Mark. “Accusations Fly as US, Israel Walk Out Of ‘Bizarre’ UN Conference.” *Cybercast News Service* September 4, 2001 <<http://www.cnsnews.com/ForeignBureaus/Archive/200109/For20010904a.html>>

“Canada Unable to Join World Conference against Racism Consensus,” Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade News Release September 8, 2001 <[http://w01.international.gc.ca/minpub/Publication.aspx?isRedirect=True&publication\\_id=378671&Language=E&docnumber=129](http://w01.international.gc.ca/minpub/Publication.aspx?isRedirect=True&publication_id=378671&Language=E&docnumber=129)>

<sup>26</sup> Picture from Durban Conference, Papillon’s Art Palace <<http://www.papillonsartpalace.com/aJnti.htm>>

Flyer from Durban Conference, www.Pintleyid.com <<http://www.pintleyid.com/HitlerDurban.GIF>>

“The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy Financial Statements as of December 31, 2005 together with Independent Auditors’ Report,” Miftah December 31, 2005 <<http://www.miftah.org/Programmes/FinancialStatements/fs-2005-final.pdf>>

<sup>28</sup> Hanan Ashrawi’s address to World Conference Against Racism, Council for Arab-British Understanding, Aug 28, 2001 <<http://www.caabu.org/press/articles/ashrawi-durban-speech.html>>

Arabs and Muslims, marched through the conference area chanting, "What we have done to apartheid in South Africa, must be done to Zionism in Palestine."<sup>29</sup>

"Mob rule" was how Andrew Srulovitch of the NGO UN Watch, described the debating process: "Ten minutes after it was voted that each victim group would be allowed to express its own victimization in their own way, a key paragraph on anti-Semitism was deleted. There was no opportunity for Jewish delegates to respond. It was clearly a kangaroo court."<sup>30</sup>

Jewish representatives were subjected to verbal assaults and threats of physical violence throughout the conference. "Like all Jewish participants, I felt concern for my safety," said Jewish Caucus delegate Anne Bayefsky. "The Jewish Center in Durban was forced to close because of threats of violence."<sup>31</sup>

Major international NGOs including Amnesty and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (renamed Human Rights First), were complicit in an HRW-led move to exclude representatives of Jewish NGOs. Anne Bayefsky of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists (IAJLJ) reported the words of HRW advocacy director, Reed Brody, indicating that representatives of Jewish groups were unwelcome.<sup>32</sup> Shimon Samuels, from the Simon Wiesenthal Center and chair of the Jewish caucus, noted that Amnesty, HRW and Save the Children "had let the Jews down in Durban."<sup>33</sup>

There is also no record of anyone in the NGO Forum challenged the fundamentally false comparisons between Israel, in the context of the ongoing conflict, and South African apartheid:

The campaign comparing Israel to Apartheid South Africa deliberately ignores the fundamental differences. In South Africa, non-whites could not vote, have sexual relations or marry across the racial divide, oppose the government or attend "white" universities. In contrast, Israel grants full legal and civic equality to all its minorities. Palestinian citizens of Israel, Druze and Jews vote together in elections, attend the same universities, and form a range of political organizations that criticize the government. There are no legal barriers to their freedom of movement or marriage. Another key difference is that in South Africa, the ANC rejected attacks against civilians, while the Jewish community has been subject to Palestinian terrorist attacks since the 1920s. The status of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and Israel's control of the area since the 1967 war are symptoms of the ongoing conflict and subject to a final settlement. Their status falls within the realm of international law and cannot be compared to apartheid measures within a state. There is no resemblance whatsoever between Israel and South Africa under the Apartheid regime.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Dateline Durban: Anti-Semitic Materials/Slogans Proliferate On Opening Day of UN Conference," Anti-Defamation League, August 31, 2001 <[http://www.adl.org/durban/durban\\_083101.asp](http://www.adl.org/durban/durban_083101.asp)>

<sup>30</sup> "Jewish Caucus Walks Out of NGO Forum against Racism," Human Rights Internet, 1 Sept 2001 <<http://www.hri.ca/racism/major/jewishcaucus.shtml>>

<sup>31</sup> Glick, Caroline. "Human Rights & Wrongs." *Moment Magazine* July 15, 2002 <<http://www.momentmag.com/archive/aug02/feat2.html>>

<sup>32</sup> <http://ngo-monitor.org/archives/op-eds/041304-1.htm>

<sup>33</sup> "Anti-Semitism and Jewish Defense at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002 Johannesburg, South Africa: An Interview with Shimon Samuels," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, March 2, 2003 <<http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-6.htm>>

<sup>34</sup> Julius, Anthony and Simon Schama, "John Berger is wrong," *Guardian Unlimited*, December 22, 2006 <[http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/anthony\\_julius\\_and\\_simon\\_schama/2006/12/bergerboycott.html](http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/anthony_julius_and_simon_schama/2006/12/bergerboycott.html)>

### C. The Final Declaration of the NGO Forum – Outlining the Durban Strategy

The NGO Forum's final declaration, adopted by consensus and without dissent, was a concentrated indictment directed at Israel. This document asserted that the "targeted victims of Israel's brand of apartheid and ethnic cleansing methods have been in particular children, women, and refugees"<sup>35</sup> and called for "a policy of complete and total isolation of Israel as an apartheid state ... the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive sanctions and embargoes, the full cessation of all links (diplomatic, economic, social, aid, military cooperation, and training) between all states and Israel."<sup>36</sup>

The NGO declaration also condemned Israel's "perpetration of racist crimes against humanity including ethnic cleansing, acts of genocide."<sup>37</sup> It redefined anti-Semitism to include "anti-Arab racism."<sup>38</sup>

Noticeably absent was any reference to Palestinian terror, or to terrorist endangerment of civilians through the use of populated Palestinian areas as launch pads for attacks on Israel. The Jewish NGO Caucus attempted to balance the resolution with a paragraph referring to virulent anti-Zionism as a contemporary form of anti-Semitism, and another condemning Holocaust denial. Both proposals were overwhelmingly rejected.

International human rights NGOs either kept quiet or actively supported the resolution. However, within a few days, outside criticism of the NGO declaration became a serious concern in the United States. At this point, leaders of some major human rights NGOs such as HRW and Amnesty International attempted to distance themselves from the declaration and Durban's blatant political agenda.<sup>39</sup>

But the record shows HRW's complicity in Durban's outcome. HRW Executive Director Kenneth Roth, who did not attend the conference, revealed his group's intentions two weeks before the proceedings, telling an interviewer, "Israeli racist practices are an appropriate topic."<sup>40</sup> And, as noted, the HRW delegation led by Reed Brody assisted in the exclusion of members of the Jewish caucus. Earlier, the HRW delegation had also refused to join in objecting to "calls for violence" in the draft declaration, claiming this clause was "justified if against apartheid or on behalf of the Intifada."<sup>41</sup> In other words, this powerful NGO, which claims to support universal human rights, sat in silence while the forum adopted language justifying suicide-bombing attacks.

The Forum's declaration has become an action plan for the radical pro-Palestinian NGOs that helped draft the document as well as many of the international NGOs that supported it. As a result, the NGO-led Durban Strategy of demonization and delegitimizing Israel's existence as a Jewish state continue to gain strength.

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<sup>35</sup> "WCAR NGO FORUM DECLARATION," SANGONeT, September 3, 2001 <<http://www.racism.org.za/index-2.html>>

<sup>36</sup> Id.

<sup>37</sup> Id.

<sup>38</sup> Id.

<sup>39</sup> Bayefsky, Anne. "Since Durban: An Entrenchment for Hatred," Christian Action for Israel September 12, 2002 <[http://christianactionforisrael.org/un/since\\_durban.html](http://christianactionforisrael.org/un/since_durban.html)>

<sup>40</sup> Bayefsky, Anne. "Human Rights Coverup." The Jerusalem Post April 13, 2004 <<http://ngo-monitor.org/archives/oped/041304-1.htm>>

<sup>41</sup> "Antisemitism in the Anti-racist Movement: the Road to Durban," Simon Wiesenthal Center August 15, 2001



## V. NGO Implementation of the Durban Strategy

The 2001 Durban Conference revived the 1975 theme that sought to define Zionism as racism, and crystallized a sustained, multi-faceted strategy of undermining and isolating Israel. This approach is promoted and driven primarily by the NGO community, which exploits the funds, slogans, and rhetoric of universal human rights to attack Israel. Coordinated NGO action attempts to use international institutions such as the UN to impose economic sanctions on Israel, in an effort to replace the Jewish state with a binational model – a goal contrary to UN policy under the International Quartet’s Road Map for Peace.

During the period between 2001 and 2006, the NGO network applied the Durban Strategy to at least five specific policy issues. These include promoting the myth of the Jenin “massacre” (2002); campaigns against Israel’s West Bank security barrier; the attempt to impose an academic boycott on Israel (2005, 2007); the church-based anti-Israel divestment campaigns (2006); and the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, in which, NGOs issued over 100 press releases, statements and reports, almost all of which were directed against Israel. Each of these NGO campaigns emphasized the Palestinian narrative of the conflict, presented the Palestinians and Lebanese as victims of Israeli aggression, eliminated the context of terror, and exaggerated the scope and impact of Israel’s counter-terror activities vis-à-vis a civilian population. This politicized approach was reflected in NGO reports and statements, which were repeated by the international media and by diplomatic officials without question or independent verification.

### A. The Falsified Jenin “Massacre” and Charges of “War Crimes”

The myth of a massacre in the Palestinian city of Jenin is a model of the Durban Strategy in action. Jenin was a major center for Palestinian terrorism during the campaign of suicide bombings aimed at Israeli civilians that began in the Fall of 2000. In April 2002, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield following a period of unprecedented Palestinian terrorist attacks, including the bombing of a Passover Seder at the Park Hotel in Netanya, where 30 civilians were killed.<sup>42</sup> The IDF opted not to rely on air power against the terrorists in Jenin, out of concern for the safety of Palestinian civilians. Instead, the army sent ground troops into the terrorist hub for close-quarter combat that lasted for nine days. In anticipation of the IDF’s arrival, terrorists lined Palestinian infrastructure with “bombs and booby traps,” significantly increasing the risk to civilians in order to augment Israeli casualties.<sup>43</sup> Palestinians later acknowledged that no more than 56 Palestinians were killed in the fighting, including 34 armed terrorists.<sup>44</sup> Thirty IDF soldiers were also killed.<sup>45</sup>

In the midst of the Jenin battle, Palestinian leaders, such as Saeb Erekat, accused Israel of killing hundreds of Palestinians, calling the event a massacre.<sup>46</sup> The accusation attracted greater attention from

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<sup>42</sup> “Operation Defensive Shield,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mar 29 – April 21, 2002  
<[http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2002/3/Operation%20Defensive%20Shield](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2002/3/Operation%20Defensive%20Shield)> “Passover Suicide Bombing at Park Hotel in Netanya,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 27, 2002  
<[http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2002/3/Passover+suicide+bombing+at+Park+Hotel+in+Netanya.htm?DisplayMode=print](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2002/3/Passover+suicide+bombing+at+Park+Hotel+in+Netanya.htm?DisplayMode=print)>

<sup>43</sup> “Palestinian Fighter describes ‘hard fight’ in Jenin,” CNN April 23, 2002  
<<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/04/22/jenin.fighter/index.html>>

<sup>44</sup> Podhoretz, John. “Why TV News Loves a Liar.” *The New York Post* May 3, 2002

<sup>45</sup> “Soldiers who fell in action in Operation Defensive Shield,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 29, 2002  
<[http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2002/3/Operation%20Defensive%20Shield#soldiers](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2002/3/Operation%20Defensive%20Shield#soldiers)>

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Arie Mekel, CNN Transcripts April 12, 2002  
<<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0204/12/bn.11.html>>

the media and diplomats when Amnesty International official Derrick Pounder told the BBC that the signs in Jenin did, indeed, point to a massacre. "I must say that the evidence before us at the moment doesn't lead us to believe that the allegations are anything other than truthful and that therefore there are large numbers of civilian dead underneath these bulldozed and bombed ruins that we see," Pounder told the BBC.<sup>47</sup> Palestinian NGOs, like Al Mezan, reinforced the theme of an Israeli massacre in their statements.<sup>48</sup>

When the facts about the fighting in Jenin emerged, Amnesty admitted that there had been no massacre.<sup>49</sup> But in its report, the NGO asserted that Israel had carried out "war crimes" against the Palestinians. In parallel, Human Rights Watch issued its own report on the battles that took place in Jenin and concluded that "grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, or war crimes" took place. The investigation focused entirely on Israel's actions in the battle, accusing the IDF of "summary executions."<sup>50</sup> As is the case in other examples in which the Durban Strategy is employed, the context of mass terror, intense close-quarter combat and Palestinian use of human shields was largely ignored. Neither Amnesty nor HRW presented realistic alternatives for Israel.

In October 2003, the UK charity known as Christian Aid released a film entitled *Peace Under Siege*. Its portrayal of Operation Defensive Shield includes a sarcastic narration in a disbelieving tone when describing Israel's justification as "eradication of the infrastructure of terror", while indicating that the real reason was an Israeli attempt to ruin the Palestinian economy and infrastructure. Palestinian suicide bombings were mentioned for only four seconds, dwarfed by the several minutes of coverage dedicated to the damage caused by the IDF response. No mention was made of the killing of 30 Israeli civilians that preceded the operation.<sup>51</sup> Even today, NGOs such as Miftah blatantly disregard the facts and continue to promote the "massacre" myth.

In contrast to the rush to condemn the Israeli operation in Jenin, when fighting broke out on May 20, 2007 between Fatah al-Islam, a Palestinian terror group [linked to al Qaeda](#), and the Lebanese Army at the Nahr al Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon, NGOs largely remained silent. Moreover, despite the high number of casualties that well-exceeded the numbers of dead in Jenin and the military tactics used by the army which included heavy reliance on tank and artillery fire at the camp, no NGOs have accused Lebanon of committing a "massacre" or "war crimes."<sup>52</sup>

## B. The Role of NGOs in the Academic Boycott

One of the main goals of the Durban Strategy, as stated in the final declaration, is to isolate and weaken Israel economically through boycotts and divestment, in a manner similar to the South African case. Those who espouse this strategy are effectively advocating for the destruction of Israel as a Jewish, democratic state.

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"Powell postpones meetings with Arafat," CNN April 12, 2002

<<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/04/12/mideast.diplomacy/index.html>>

<sup>47</sup> "Jenin 'massacre evidence growing.'" BBC News 18 Apr 2002 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1937048.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1937048.stm)>

<sup>48</sup> "War Crimes and Massacres Committed by the Israeli Occupation Forces Out of View of International Media," Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, April 7, 2002 <[http://www.mezan.org/site\\_en/press\\_room/press\\_detail.php?id=151](http://www.mezan.org/site_en/press_room/press_detail.php?id=151)>

<sup>49</sup> "Experts weigh up Jenin 'massacre.'" BBC News Apr 29, 2002 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/1957862.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1957862.stm)>

<sup>50</sup> "Jenin: IDF Military Operations," Human Rights Watch, May 2002 <[http://hrw.org/reports/2002/israel3/israel0502-01.htm#P49\\_1774](http://hrw.org/reports/2002/israel3/israel0502-01.htm#P49_1774)>

<sup>51</sup> "Christian Aid's Political Campaign Continues: 'Peace Under Siege,'" NGO Monitor October 23, 2003 <[http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/christian\\_aid\\_s\\_political\\_campaign\\_continues\\_peace\\_under\\_siege](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/christian_aid_s_political_campaign_continues_peace_under_siege)>

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.ngo-](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/double_standards_hr_w_amnesty_christian_aid_statements_on_the_conflict_between_fatah_al_islam_and_the_lebanese_army)

[monitor.org/article/double\\_standards\\_hr\\_w\\_amnesty\\_christian\\_aid\\_statements\\_on\\_the\\_conflict\\_between\\_fatah\\_al\\_islam\\_and\\_the\\_lebanese\\_army](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/double_standards_hr_w_amnesty_christian_aid_statements_on_the_conflict_between_fatah_al_islam_and_the_lebanese_army)

The British Association of University Teachers (AUT) effort to impose an academic boycott in 2005 and revived again by the British University and College Union (UCU) in May 2007, serve as an important example. Although the attempts have been widely criticized internationally, the publicity generated by these efforts reinforces and promotes the goals of the Durban Strategy.

In the context of the AUT campaign, and a subsequent attempt by another academic union known as NAFTHE, a number of NGOs played a central role. In particular, Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), one of the most active NGOs at the Durban Conference, provided the language and much of the literature distributed by boycott activists.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, AUT members who supported the academic boycott cited PNGO's petitions and letters – which repeat false and highly distorted claims against Israel - and expressed plans to distribute PNGO's anti-Israel materials. The PNGO website highlights statements by South African President Thabo Mbeki on the "apartheid wall" and includes many other references to South Africa.<sup>54</sup> PNGO's reports on this issue use the language of incitement and manipulate international legal terms, attacking Israel for "colonization", "Judaizing the Jordan Valley," "ghettoization", and "ethnic cleansing."<sup>55</sup>

### C. NGOs and the Church-Based Divestment Campaigns

The Durban Strategy is also manifest in the effort to gain the participation of Anglican, Lutheran, and other Protestant churches in divestment from Israeli firms and economic activities. In this process, the role of a radical Palestinian-based NGO known as Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center is central. Sabeel asserts that the "Israeli form of apartheid ... is much worse than what was practiced in South Africa" and that "the occupation...continues to be the root cause of the violence and terror."<sup>56</sup>

Sabeel leader, Rev Naim Ateek goes beyond exploiting the language of human rights, and uses anti-Semitic imagery to condemn Israel. "... [I]t seems to many of us that Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians around him," Ateek said during Sabeel's Easter Message. "The Israeli government crucifixion system is operating daily."<sup>57</sup> Sabeel also promotes a one-state solution. According to the group, "Indeed, the ideal and best solution has always been to envisage ultimately a bi-national state in Palestine-Israel.... One state for two nations and three religions."<sup>58</sup> In other words, the goal of this NGO, which is closely linked to Christian Aid (CA) in the UK, is the replacement of Israel and the end of Jewish sovereign equality.

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<sup>53</sup> Black, Edwin. "Anti-Israel activists at Durban were funded by Ford Foundation," *JTA News* October 16, 2001 <<http://www.jta.org/story.asp?id=031015-FORD1>>

<sup>54</sup> "International Campaigns Against The Wall," Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations' Network <[http://www.pngo.net/campaigns/about\\_wall.htm](http://www.pngo.net/campaigns/about_wall.htm)>

<sup>55</sup> "The Eastern Wall: Closing the Circle of Our Ghettoization," *The Palestine Monitor* December 24, 2005 <[http://www.palestinemonitor.org/nueva\\_web/updates\\_news/pngo/close\\_wall\\_circle.htm](http://www.palestinemonitor.org/nueva_web/updates_news/pngo/close_wall_circle.htm)>

"The Position of the Palestinian NGO Network in the Light of the Current Situation," Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations' Network July 24, 2002 <[http://www.pngo.net/statments/intifada/24\\_7\\_2002ec.htm](http://www.pngo.net/statments/intifada/24_7_2002ec.htm)>

<sup>56</sup> "SUICIDE BOMBERS: What is theologically and morally wrong with suicide bombings? A Palestinian Christian perspective," Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Summer 2002 <<http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/cstone25/suicidebombers.htm>>

<sup>57</sup> "An Easter Message from Sabeel," Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, April 6, 2001 <<http://www.sabeel.org/pdfs/2001%20Easter%20Message.htm>>

<sup>58</sup> "THE JERUSALEM SABEEL DOCUMENT: PRINCIPLES FOR A JUST PEACE IN PALESTINE-ISRAEL," Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center <<http://www.sabeel.org/old/justice/index.htm>>

Sabeel's tactic of professing non-violence while undermining Israel through revisionist history and ignoring Palestinian terrorism has been utilized in divestment resolutions from the USA Presbyterian Church General Assembly (later repealed) and the World Council of Churches. This NGO also exploited its Christian Aid links in February 2006, when the patron of UK Friends of Sabeel (FOSUK), Bishop Gladwin (who is also the Chair of CA) supported a motion for “morally responsible investment” at the Church of England Synod.<sup>59</sup> Dual pressure from FOSUK and CA ensured that the motion passed, but the Church's Ethical Investment Advisory Board (EIAB) refused to implement the decision. Gladwin was vocal in condemning the EIAB as was his close ally, Rev. Stephen Sizer, Chair of FOSUK, who has continued the UK divestment campaign by withdrawing his parish contribution to the Church of England.<sup>60</sup>

#### D. The NGO Network and the 2006 Lebanon War

The central role of NGOs in promoting the Durban Strategy of delegitimizing Israel was evident again during the Israel-Hezbollah/Lebanon war in July 2006. Despite the fact that Hezbollah – a terror group operating from Lebanese territory – initiated the war with Katyusha rocket barrages across Northern Israel and a cross-border attack that resulted in eight Israeli soldiers killed and two kidnapped, the stream of NGO reports focused on condemning the Israeli response. During this period, over 100 statements were issued by 19 NGOs, many of which were active at the Durban Conference. Amnesty and HRW published 27 and 29 statements, respectively.<sup>61</sup> These reports, op-ed articles and other statements included repeated allegations of Israeli “war crimes” and “violations of international law,” while giving far less attention to Hezbollah, including the approximately 4,000 rockets fired at Israeli civilians<sup>62</sup> and the terrorist group’s use of human shields.<sup>63</sup> Substantive claims were again based on “eyewitnesses”, whose statements supported the NGOs pre-determined conclusions and were simply repeated. To provide “balance”, condemnations of Hezbollah were published weeks later, with fewer details and less visibility.<sup>64</sup>

In contrast, the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC) issued a report in November 2006 compiling extensive documentation and photographic evidence of “Hezbollah’s consistent pattern of intentionally placing its fighters and weapons among civilians,” showing that Hezbollah was “well aware of the civilian casualties that would ensue” from this activity. This concrete evidence directly contradicts claims by Human Rights Watch that it found “**no cases**” in which Hezbollah deliberately used civilians as human shields<sup>65</sup>. Similarly, it discredits Amnesty International allegations that “[i]n the overwhelming majority of destroyed or damaged buildings it examined, Amnesty International found **no evidence** to indicate that the buildings were being used by Hezbollah fighters as hide-outs or to store weapons.”<sup>66</sup> The

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<sup>59</sup> “Ethical Investment: Report by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (GS 1604),” The Anglican Communion <<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/the-holy-land/data/File%20G.pdf>>

<sup>60</sup> Morgan, Oliver. “Confessions of an ethics man,” *Guardian Unlimited* March 5, 2006 <<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/business/story/0,,1723472,00.html>>

<sup>61</sup> “Overkill: NGO Responses to the 2006 Israel-Lebanon Conflict,” NOG Monitor September 25, 2006 <[http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/ngo\\_campaigns\\_in\\_the\\_lebanon\\_war](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/ngo_campaigns_in_the_lebanon_war)>

<sup>62</sup> “Hizbullah attacks northern Israel and Israel’s response,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 12, 2006 <<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terrorism+from+Lebanon-+Hizbullah/Hizbullah+attack+in+northern+Israel+and+Israels+response+12-Jul-2006.htm>>

<sup>63</sup> “Hezbollah’s use of Lebanese civilians as human shields,” Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, December 5, 2006 <[http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng\\_n/html/human\\_shields.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/html/human_shields.htm)>

<sup>64</sup> “Lebanon/Israel: Hezbollah Hit Israel with Cluster Munitions During Conflict,” Human Rights Watch October 19, 2006 <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/10/18/lebanon14412.htm>>

<sup>65</sup> “Summary,” Human Rights Watch <[http://hrw.org/reports/2006/lebanon0806/2.htm#\\_Toc142299220](http://hrw.org/reports/2006/lebanon0806/2.htm#_Toc142299220)>

<sup>66</sup> “Israel/Lebanon: Out of all proportion - civilians bear the brunt of the war,” Amnesty International November 21, 2006 <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMD020332006?open&of=ENG-2MD>>

following tables prepared by NGO Monitor compare the study’s documentary evidence of Hezbollah activity in Bint Jbeil and Aitaroun with the claims made by HRW and Amnesty (See [www.ngo-monitor.org](http://www.ngo-monitor.org) for full report):

**Human Rights Watch**

**ITIC Report Discredits HRW’s “Fatal Strikes” Report (August 2006)**

<b>Specific Instances of Hezbollah Activity in Areas HRW Claims There was No Hezbollah Presence</b>	
<b>"Fatal Strikes"</b>	<b>ITIC Report</b>
<p><a href="#">Bint Jbeil</a>: Killing of 4 Civilians on July 15.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRW eyewitness: "there was <b>no fighting</b> taking place in the village—there <b>was no one but civilians</b>. The civil defense was there to help us [recover the bodies]."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 Bases and 5 Weapons storehouses inside the village are shown in an aerial photograph.<sup>67</sup></li> <li>• 87 rockets fired from within village houses, 109 from within a 200 meter radius of the village, and 136 within a 500 meter radius of the village.<sup>68</sup></li> <li>• 60 regular Hezbollah operatives in the village, including about 15 in charge of storehouses.<sup>69</sup></li> <li>• Arms, ammunition, and equipment were stored in the village before the war. Some equipment was placed in storehouses; some inside civilian residential buildings.<sup>70</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>67</sup> “Hezbollah’s use of Lebanese civilians as human shields,” Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, December 5, 2006 <[http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng\\_n/html/human\\_shields.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/html/human_shields.htm)>

<sup>68</sup> “Hezbollah’s use of Lebanese civilians as human shields,” Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, December 5, 2006 <[http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng\\_n/html/human\\_shields.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/html/human_shields.htm)>

<sup>69</sup> “Hezbollah’s use of Lebanese civilians as human shields,” Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, December 5, 2006 <[http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng\\_n/html/human\\_shields.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/html/human_shields.htm)>

<sup>70</sup> “Hezbollah’s use of Lebanese civilians as human shields,” Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, December 5, 2006 <[http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng\\_n/html/human\\_shields.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/html/human_shields.htm)>



## Amnesty International

### ITIC Report Discredits Amnesty's "Deliberate Destruction or Collateral Damage?" (August 2006) and "Out of All Proportion" (November, 2006)

Aitaroun: Killing of Civilians July 16, 17.

#### "Out of All Proportion"

- "found **no evidence** of Hezbollah military activity in or near the sites that were hit."

- 18 rockets fired within village houses, 23 within a 200 meter radius, and 54 within a 500 meter radius.<sup>71</sup>
- Senior Hezbollah Figure, Nabil Qawouk speaking in Aitaroun **at the memorial service** for those killed in the village: "The arms are in the villages and towns of south Lebanon, but they are invisible."<sup>72</sup>

The language and rhetoric in many of these NGO publications repeated the stock phrases and slogans used in the case of "Jenin massacre", the "apartheid wall" and similar demonization campaigns. For example, in an op-ed in *The Guardian* on July 31, 2006, HRW Emergencies Director Peter Bouckaert wrote, "The pattern of Israeli behavior in southern Lebanon suggests a deliberate policy...Israel blames Hezbollah for the massive civilian toll in Lebanon, claiming that they are...fighting from within the civilian population. This is a convenient excuse."<sup>73</sup> And on the day after Hezbollah's kidnapping attack, an Amnesty International press release declared that "Israel must put an immediate end to attacks against civilians."<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the PNGO network issued an open letter to the U.S. Secretary of State stating: "The force being used by the Israeli troops...is inhuman and savage, aiming at exterminating as many people as possible. This brings to our minds the force used by Serbia in Bosnia as well as the crimes against humanity committed in the Second World War."<sup>75</sup> And the highly-publicized reports published by HRW and Amnesty International distorted standards of international law, removed the context of the war and downplayed Hezbollah's tactics from the analysis of human rights claims.

HRW received unprecedented public criticism for its tendentious coverage of the Lebanon War (even before publication of the ITIC report), focused on the credibility of the NGO's research and its determination to distort human rights norms to demonize Israel.<sup>76 77</sup>

<sup>71</sup> "Hezbollah's use of Lebanese civilians as human shields," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, December 5, 2006 <[http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng\\_n/html/human\\_shields.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/html/human_shields.htm)>

<sup>72</sup> "Hezbollah's use of Lebanese civilians as human shields," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, December 5, 2006 <[http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng\\_n/html/human\\_shields.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/html/human_shields.htm)>

<sup>73</sup> Bouckaert, Peter. "White flags, not a legitimate target." *Guardian Unlimited* July 31, 2006 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/syria/story/0,,1834063,00.html>>

<sup>74</sup> "Israel/Lebanon: End immediately attacks against civilians," Amnesty International, July 13, 2006 <<http://news.amnesty.org/index/ENGMDE150642006>>

<sup>75</sup> "An Open Letter to Condoleezza Rice," Miftah July 25, 2006 <<http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=10929&CategoryId=32>>

<sup>76</sup> Dershowitz, Alan. "What are they watching?" *The New York Sun* August 23, 2006 <<http://www.nysun.com/pf.php?id=38428>>

The campaigns outlined above highlight that instead of playing a useful and constructive role in promoting mutual acceptance and a just solution to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, the NGO campaigning to promote the Durban Strategy has had the opposite outcome, by legitimizing, and providing the justification for Palestinian extremism.

#### F. Additional NGO Activity

Other NGOs that utilize the Durban Strategy and are active in its promotion at the UN institutions are briefly discussed below. These examples are meant to be representative and are not exhaustive.

### **ADALAH**

[Adalah](#),<sup>78</sup> an Arab-run NGO based in Israel, plays a major role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Adalah defines itself an "independent human rights organization...non-partisan legal center that exists to protect human rights in general, and the rights of the Arab minority (in Israel) in particular." Although in certain cases Adalah has made a positive contribution to the mandate it set itself in its mission statement, for example [winning a more equitable distribution of funds in the budget of the Ministry of Religious Affairs](#), its international advocacy work betrays a consistent focus on highly politicized issues rather than the legal aspects of human rights. In its advocacy campaigns, in contradiction to its mission statement, Adalah 1) provides very carefully selected and incomplete evidence to support alleged discriminatory practices and other human rights issues in Israel; and 2) Adalah deliberately obfuscates the distinction between Arab citizens of Israel and the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The following are examples of how these practices are reflected in Adalah's submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD):

- Adalah minimizes steps by Israel to make its society more inclusive and attributes ulterior motives to the government's actions, based on subjective and biased factors. For instance, in 2004, the Israeli Government examined ways to incorporate the Israeli Arab population<sup>79</sup> into the national service program. Such policies would provide Israeli Arabs with the same benefits as those Israelis who serve in the IDF. Instead of acknowledging this positive step by the government, Adalah claims, without providing corroborative evidence, that "national/military service in Israel is not neutral, but relates to difference: it constitutes the Jewish Zionist identity, as distinct from the Arab minority's identity." Adalah omits from its statement, however, that the Druze communities of Israel as well as many Bedouins and members of other Arab groups participate in national/military service. Adalah further claims without basis that by participating in national service, Israeli Arabs would be forced "to submit to a rationale that further grounds discrimination and oppression." Adalah ignores the government recommendations that such service would take place in projects within the local Arab communities.<sup>80</sup>
- Adalah attributes racist motives to Israeli policies that are necessitated by the security situation. Adalah argues that the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law is "a racist, discriminatory law that denies a person's basic human rights on the basis of his or her

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<sup>77</sup> Bell, Avi. "Getting it Straight" [The New York Sun](#) July 25, 2006  
<<http://www.nysun.com/article/36647>>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/adalah>

<sup>79</sup> The Druze and many Bedouins already serve in the IDF.

<sup>80</sup> Israeli Government Submission to CERD at 44.

national belonging.” Adalah fails to mention, however, that this law was not enacted for discriminatory purposes but rather, because of persons “who were granted legal status in Israel based on their marriage to an Israeli citizen, and took advantage of their Israeli ID to pass checkpoints and carry into Israel either suicide bombers or explosives.” Twenty-three terrorist attacks resulted from an abuse of this law.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, Adalah distorts international law by claiming that there is a “basic human right” to live in any country one wishes. Many countries do not grant automatic citizenship rights as a result of marriage. Adalah also fails to inform that this law is temporary and can be repealed should the security situation in Israel improve.

- Adalah’s characterizations of Israeli policies create more divisiveness in Israeli society, thereby erasing the context of the intense ethno-national conflict that has continued for decades, including the denial of the right of the Jewish nation to self-determination. Instead, Adalah’s commentary on the Citizenship and Entry Law reflects attempts to further inflame tensions between Israeli Jews and Arabs by eliminating the distinction between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians living in the Palestinian Authority as well as Arabs from other countries. Adalah complains that Israel does not have a right to expand the Law to include spouses who may be residents of Lebanon, Syria, Iran or Iraq – despite the clear security risk such people may pose. Instead, Adalah alleges that the law “[cuts off] Palestinian citizens of Israel from the Palestinian people and from the Arab nation to which they belong.”
- Adalah distorts and provides misleading information regarding Israeli government policies, particularly in regards to the Bedouin. Adalah alleges, again without sources to back up its claims, that the Israeli government has allocated “no money” for its proposed development of Bedouin towns in the Negev and “ignores the dire socio-economic situation” of their populations. It alleges Israel is purposely engaging in discrimination by “seeking to concentrate the Arab Bedouin on the smallest possible land area” and “gives no solutions to the existing harsh situation and housing problems, and does not allocate resources to or allow for spatial development for the benefit of the Arab community.” In fact, the Israeli government has allocated NIS 325 million to the Bedouin communities and provides vocational training and subsidized employment to many Bedouin.<sup>82</sup> Adalah further attempts to create alienation between the Israeli Jewish and Arab populations by referring to the Negev as the “Naqab”.

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

[Amnesty International](#)’s reporting contains numerous credibility deficiencies stemming from its political agenda and lack of independent research capabilities:

- A recent [study](#) conducted by the Conflict Analysis Resource Center ([CERAC](#))<sup>83</sup> examining Amnesty International’s activities in Columbia concluded that Amnesty has “substantive problems in their handling of quantitative information.” The authors of the study found that “problems include failure to specify sources, unclear definitions, an erratic reporting template and a distorted portrayal of conflict dynamics . . . . The quantitative human rights

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<sup>81</sup> Israeli Government Submission to CERD at 67.

<sup>82</sup> Israeli Government Submission at 89.

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.cerac.org.co/>

and conflict information produced by these organizations for other countries must be viewed with scepticism along with cross-country and time series human rights data based on Amnesty International reports.”<sup>84</sup>

- The [Capital Research Center](#) (CRC), based in Washington, D.C., and established in 1984 to study the advocacy activities of non-profit organizations, [issued a report in May](#) on Amnesty International (AI).<sup>85</sup> The study argued that under the leadership of Secretary General Irene Khan, AI has adopted "double standards on human rights, a leftist political agenda, an unrealistic view on armed conflict, and propaganda against America and Israel." The report included a statistical analysis of Amnesty's published material from the beginning of 2005 to May 2006. (The CRC approach is similar to the one developed and used by [NGO Monitor](#).) The results show that Israel is the subject of the greatest number of Amnesty publications per million people with fifty-six times more reports per million than North Korea and twenty-five times more than Egypt.
- A recent [letter](#) sent by Khan to leaders of the EU, reflects Amnesty's one-sided approach. In the letter, [Khan blamed Israel for the economic crisis in the PA while ignoring Palestinian violence and corruption](#). Khan accused Israel of engaging in "deliberate and reckless" attacks on civilians. Rather than condemning the PA and calling for an immediate halt to Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians, Khan stated the "homemade rockets" are "creat[ing] a climate of fear, which is leading to a hardening of positions in favour of a harsh military response towards the Palestinians." Khan called on leaders of the EU to "ensure that any peace process" includes the removal of settlements and dismantling the "fence/wall" as well as "ending closures" and "a fair solution to the refugee question." Khan makes no call for an end to Palestinian violence, nor does she call on the Hamas-led PA to recognize Israel and abide by international agreements.

Three of the most radical NGOs operating in the Arab-Israeli conflict zone are ICAHD, Badil, and Al-Haq. The negative role played by these NGOs is reflected in their submission to CERD. The following are examples of inflammatory rhetoric found in the joint statement of these organizations:

- Like Adalah, this group of NGOs exacerbates tensions between Israeli Jews and Arabs by eliminating the distinction between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians living in the Palestinian Authority. These NGOs also attempt to erase the fact of continual Jewish presence in this area and the long-standing religious and historical ties of the Jewish people to the land of Israel by characterizing Palestinians as "indigenous" and Jews as "colonizers".
- The statement deliberately obscures the long history of Arab rejectionism, warfare, and terrorism. Instead, the statement alleges that Israel engaged in "forced expulsions" of the "indigenous population", as if the conflict and attacks against Israelis did not exist.
- Rather than provide constructive evidence to CERD, the Joint NGO submission includes highly inflammatory and even anti-Semitic language. A 1991 pseudo-academic article submitted by these NGOs compares Israel to Nazi Germany. Such rhetoric does not help the Committee evaluate Israel's compliance with CERD.

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<sup>84</sup> [http://www.ngo-monitor.org/data/images/File/evidencefromcolumbia\\_feb2007.pdf](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/data/images/File/evidencefromcolumbia_feb2007.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.capitalresearch.org/pubs/pdf/OT0506.pdf>

## ICAHN

The Israel Committee Against House Demolitions ([ICAHN](#)) is an extremely politicized NGO whose work can be considered neither credible nor objective.<sup>86</sup> ICAHD states that its goal is “to oppose and resist Israeli demolition of Palestinian houses in the Occupied Territories” but it is an extremely politicized lobbying group whose activities extend far beyond issues of housing.

[ICAHN campaigns](#) for boycott divestment and sanctions against Israel and has consistently labeled Israel an ["apartheid" state, thus demonstrating an overwhelming political bias](#). Similar highly politicized anti-Israel statements have been documented in detail in NGO Monitor reports.

ICAHN’s submission to CERD claims to provide “statistics” on the numbers of Palestinian homes demolished in the West Bank. No sources for these statistics are provided making independent verification of ICAHD’s allegations impossible. Moreover, ICAHD’s claims that Israeli planning and development policies are founded in racism are opinions based on ideology, and of no validity beyond this. [Independent and carefully documented research](#) conducted by Israeli attorney, Justus Reid Weiner, found for instance, that accusations that Israel’s demolition of illegal Palestinian structures were based on “discrimination” or “racism” were without basis. According to Weiner, from 1996 to 2001, Jerusalem municipal inspectors reported nearly 4,000 building violations in Arab neighborhoods. Many experts, however, put this number at only 30% of the actual number of violations. Weiner’s research found that “only when no other options exist, the city issues a demolition order that requires no fewer than five signatures, from the local inspector up to and including the mayor. A demolition costs the city an average of 50,000 to 60,000 New Israeli Shekels (approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000 U.S.) each.” For the years 1997, 1998, and 1999, for example, the actual number of demolitions was 28, 31, and 36 respectively. These figures were confirmed by the Palestinian Authority and show that ICAHD, along with other NGOs, greatly exaggerate the scope of Israel’s demolition policy.<sup>87</sup>

## BADIL

[The BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights](#), established in Bethlehem in 1998, is one of the most active NGOs in promoting [extremist Palestinian political positions in the context of the conflict against Israel](#). Its declared goal is to “provide a resource pool of alternative, critical and progressive information and analysis on the question of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons.” Its actions, in contrast, focus on the use of the suffering of refugees as a political basis for maintaining the conflict with Israel. Examples of BADIL’s activities include:

- BADIL campaigns against the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, openly declaring the goal of using the "right of return" to "alter the demographic balance in Israel so much that it would destroy Israel's Zionist, exclusionist character... "
- BADIL uses UN Resolutions selectively in order to promote its agenda. It claims that UN Resolution 194 states: "refugees wishing to return to their homes...should be permitted to do so." Quoting selectively, BADIL purposely excludes significant parts of the resolution which contradict its message. The resolution actually [states](#) "that refugees wishing to return to their homes *and live at peace* with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.eu-del.org.il/english/Award%20notification%20for%20website.doc>

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=253&PID=0&IID=952>



earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property...Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, *resettlement* and economic and social rehabilitation of refugees and payment of compensation..." (emphasis added).

- BADIL publishes the "al-Majdal" magazine whose [September 2004 editorial](#) addresses the ICJ ruling on [Israel's security barrier](#), arguing that "Academic, consumer, cultural, and sports boycotts, divestment and a campaign for sanctions by states must all be considered." BADIL was also a signatory to an August 2002 [call to boycott Israel](#), including an endorsement of the NGO Program of Action conceived at the [2001 Durban conference](#). BADIL's statement emphasizes the Durban declaration's call for the "launch of an international anti-Israeli Apartheid movement as implemented against the South African Apartheid." As of January 2007, BADIL's webpage, press statements, and other activities continue to give prominent display to support for anti-Israel boycotts, divestment campaigns, and the attempt to label Israel as "an apartheid state".
- In 2007, Badil issued a strategy document entitled, "[Call to Action](#)", on the occasion of the "'40 years since Israel's occupation' and the upcoming '60 years since the Nakba.'" This document provides a blueprint for the concerted implementation of the Durban Strategy over the next year. To implement these goals, Badil's calls on its coalition members to among other activities, "[e]nlist journalists to organize a targeted campaign to expose the lies of AIPAC and the Anti-Defamation League and to expose the Jewish and Zionist community's double standards regarding Nakba & Occupation" and to hold "a series of creative and effective awareness-raising events targeting the Jewish public in 2007-2008" regarding the "Right of Return".

## OTHER NGOS

Other politicized NGOs include [Mossawa](#),<sup>88</sup> [Ittijah](#),<sup>89</sup> and [Al Mezan](#).<sup>90</sup> NGO Monitor's research has shown that the work of these NGOs also lacks credibility. For example:

- [Mossawa](#) claims to advocate for improved economic and social conditions for Israeli Arabs, but whose work is seen to actually deepen the rift between Israel's Arabs and Jews. This politicized NGO recently held a conference in which it called for the eradication of the Israeli flag and national anthem; the right of the Arab minority to have a veto over matters of national import; and the immediate implementation of the "Right of Return." A recent analysis in [Ha'aretz](#) characterized this activity as a sign that Mossawa intends to continue conflict within the State of Israel even after the establishment of a Palestinian state. Due to its one-sided agenda as well as its provocative political activities, this NGO cannot be considered as a credible source for accurately portraying the human rights situation in Israel.
- [Ittijah](#) claims it "strives to strengthen and empower the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel by promoting the development of Palestinian civil society." This NGO, however is an active supporter of the campaign to internationally isolate Israel and characterizes Israel as an "apartheid state". Ittijah was highly influential in shaping the outcome of the 2001

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<sup>88</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/mossawa>

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/ittijah>

<sup>90</sup> [http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/al\\_mezan\\_center\\_for\\_human\\_rights](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/al_mezan_center_for_human_rights)

Durban Conference, "[where \[it\] gathered, facilitated and directed the vision and position of the Palestinian NGOs inside Israel on racism, particularly Israeli-state racism towards Palestinian citizens, and the apartheid...](#)" Ittijah's leading role at Durban and its current activities shows that it is not an objective source of information regarding alleged discriminatory practices in Israel.

- [Al Mezan](#) claims to "promote, protect, and prevent violations of human rights in general." This NGO, however, distorts international law, falsely labels Israel an "apartheid state" and accuses it of "war crimes". Al-Mezan's reporting frequently erases the context of Palestinian terror and corruption. Its website includes examples of incitement, such as statements that Israel is "[killing and abducting the Palestinian population](#)" or engaging in "ethnic cleansing". It's the website also contains numerous inflammatory images.

## **VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given the impact of NGO involvement in the 2001 Durban Conference and prepcom, it is important that the 2009 Prepcom consider the implications of holding another NGO Forum, and also weigh the role of reports submitted by politicized NGOs in the overall activities. The Committee's impact will be positive only if it is perceived to be credible, accurate and impartial. These elements will be undermined if the Prepcom places undue reliance on politicized NGOs that are in fact part of the conflict. The uncritical acceptance and repetition of the reports and publications issued by these NGOs by the Committee will greatly diminish the impact of Committee's work in opposing discrimination against all peoples and will further damage the universal principles of international human rights.