

January 20, 2021

Re: European Union funding for B'Tselem and the “apartheid” canard

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear High Representative/Vice President Borrell,

We are writing to bring your attention to a new highly discriminatory and hateful campaign by your grantee, B'Tselem, under the banner of “A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid.”

As shown in [NGO Monitor's analysis](#), B'Tselem uses antisemitic tropes, advances misleading legal claims, and embraces a “one-state” formula for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict rejecting in practice Jewish self-determination. We also note that, through barely veiled rhetoric, B'Tselem has been promoting international sanctions and other forms of BDS against Israel.

The use of the term “Jewish supremacy” throughout the publication is a transparent attempt to invoke a parallel between Israel and White Supremacy – a noxious and racist ideology. This comparison is absurd on its face, as B'Tselem distorts legitimate expressions of Jewish self-determination into sinister and racist. In this regard, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism clearly describes “Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor” as an expression of antisemitism.

Additionally, the document uses the phrase “from the river to the sea,” echoing long-standing Palestinian terminology for the destruction of Israel.

This campaign heralds a change in B'Tselem's core mission, as the NGO departs from an emphasis on documenting alleged human rights violations in the West Bank to challenging the legitimacy of Israel's existence.

According to available information, the European Union has provided approximately NIS 2 million to B'Tselem since 2016.

Given your long-term and significant contributions to B'Tselem over the years, we believe it important that you are made aware of the hateful content promoted by the NGO. Antisemitism, distortions, and radical political advocacy stand in stark contrast to European Union funding goals and might harm its reputation.

Sincerely,

Prof Gerald M. Steinberg
President

Olga Deutsch
Vice President

Copies sent to: Mr. Emanuele GIAUFRET, Head of EU Delegation to Israel