



General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 September 2016

English only

Human Rights Council

Thirty-third session

Agenda item 7

**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

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.

[29 August 2016]

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

GE.16-15439(E)



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Amuta for NGO Responsibility Written Statement:

Norway Joins Donor Consortium Promoting Antisemitism and anti-Israel BDS

In 1991, Norway voted for the repeal of the infamous UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 which falsely and maliciously equated Zionism and Jewish national self-determination with racism. But now, Norway has shamefully joined in promoting and provided monetary support to an institution that maintains this canard and perpetuates antisemitism and systematic discrimination against Israel.

As of June 1, 2016, Norway began providing NOK 5 million to the Human Rights & International Humanitarian Law Secretariat (Secretariat), managed by the Institute of Law at Birzeit University (IoL-BZU) in Ramallah and the NIRAS consulting firm. Under the donor consortium, which has included Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, 80% (\$10.38 million) of the Secretariat's budget is allocated to core NGO funding.

According to Secretariat documentation, the donor countries are responsible for "deciding on the general framework and policy for the HR/IHL Secretariat" as well as approving the implementation of this policy. Therefore, the donor countries are directly accountable for the materials and activities undertaken by the HR/IHL Secretariat and its grantees, including those discussed in this submission.

Contrary to its claims of promoting human rights and humanitarian law, the Secretariat funds NGOs active in illegitimate BDS campaigns (boycott, divestment and sanctions), repugnant antisemitism, and other forms of anti-Israel demonization, including the rejection of Israel, regardless of borders. Many of these groups funded by the HR/IHL Secretariat shamefully and falsely refer to illegal Palestinian terror attacks on Israeli civilians as so-called "resistance".

The Secretariat is a primary funding mechanism for the promotion and support of BDS:

- **13 out of 24 core fund recipients support BDS;**
- **11 out of 20 project fund recipients support BDS;**
- **Core fund recipients that support BDS receive \$5.78 million of the \$10.38 million.**

Several core group members receiving funding have engaged in repugnant antisemitism including Badil and MIFTAH. Badil has published antisemitic cartoons on its website, as well as imagery promoting the elimination of Israel, which is a widely recognized form of antisemitism. A cartoon that won a monetary prize for 2nd prize in BADIL's 2010 Al-Awda Nakba caricature competition is a blatant representation of classic antisemitic tropes, including a Jewish man, garbed in traditional Hasidic attire, with a hooked nose and side locks. A 2012 image depicts a "tsunami of keys" (representing Palestinian "refugees"), drowning a man wearing a skullcap with a Star of David.

It is unknown if officials of the Norwegian government, whether in the MFA, NORAD, or some other agency, took any steps, prior to its funding, to investigate the presence of antisemitism within the Secretariat and its recipients and to ensure that antisemitism and hate are not funded by taxpayers. What if any due diligence was done?

If such an investigation was made, Norwegian officials would have seen that most of the HR/IHL Secretariat grantees erase or minimize the context of Palestinian terrorism and attacks on Israeli civilians. Several NGO recipients also appear to have links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorist organization. The PFLP is a designated terrorist organization according to the EU. Funding to these organizations may therefore violate both international and domestic laws relating to terror financing.

Secretariat grantees also continue to promote discriminatory and regressive political rhetoric and propaganda that falsely singles out Jewish self-determination as a form of racism, as expressed in the notorious 2001 Durban NGO

Forum final declaration. In February 2014, IoL-BZU published a 15-page report, “Advocating for Palestinian Rights in conformity with International Law: Guidelines” (English and Arabic). This document is a strategic manual for exploiting legal terms and rhetoric to demonize and isolate Israel internationally (“lawfare”), as well as to emphasize that Israel, regardless of borders, is among “racist regimes which are absolutely prohibited in their entirety.” This scurrilous documented was posted prominently on the Secretariat Facebook page.

In addition to activities that promote antisemitism, anti-Israel demonization, and greater conflict in the region, the Secretariat is marred by financial management issues that should further disturb taxpayers: the financial report of the Secretariat places administration expenses and salaries at \$3.8 million, one-third of the total budget.

Finally, we note that Norway's decision to begin funding the HR/IHL Secretariat is particularly disturbing in contrast to the criticism in the Swiss and Dutch Parliaments over their governments' role in this anti-peace donor consortium. In June, the Dutch government passed a resolution calling for a review of its funding to the Secretariat due to its support of BDS. Swiss Parliament is due to cast a similar vote in its fall session following a motion signed by 41 MPs questioning Swiss funding to Secretariat.

For all of these reasons, the Norwegian government is encouraged to reconsider its decision.
