

Spain: Government funding for NGOs promoting the Palestinian narrative

By Editorial
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Overview

- Spanish government funding to Israeli, Palestinian, and Spanish NGOs is primarily provided through the Agency for International Cooperation and Development ([AECID](#)), a subdivision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Spanish Cooperation Office in Jerusalem oversees projects funded through AECID.
- Additional NGO support comes from Spain's Autonomous Communities and Regions. For example, the 2008 NGO Bilbao Initiative promoted political warfare by accusing Israel of "apartheid, colonization and occupation" and calling for further demonization strategies at Durban II.
- Many of the NGOs funded by Spain use the language of human rights and peace to promote the Palestinian narrative and political warfare against Israel.
- Spain is one of the least transparent European countries in terms of funding for NGOs. On February 18, 2009, NGO Monitor submitted a request for information on NGOs and AECID-funded projects, but did not receive a response.
- Using public documents and media reports, NGO Monitor identified Spanish NGO allocations and project details, including the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHHD), the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ), and Breaking the Silence, among others. No information was found on the processes used to evaluate and approve this NGO funding.
- As part of a project funded by the Basque government, Spanish NGO MEWANDO published a newsletter utilizing "apartheid" and "genocide" rhetoric and featuring a cartoon depicting an African-American lynching victim and a Jewish child in the Holocaust as "Palestinians."
- The municipality of Barcelona provided €56,000 for the March 2010 Russell Tribunal on Palestine, which calls for "existing legal actions and campaigns in the context of BDS to be stepped up and widened within the EU and globally."
- For detailed analyses of the activities of European government funded political NGOs and their role in political warfare, see [NGO Monitor's website](#).

Note: *The majority of funding information in this report is based on an October 2009 Official State Memo, available on the internet.*^[1]

Spain provides significant funding to highly politicized NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Due to a lack of transparency, the full scope of this support is unclear, in particular regarding funding from the autonomous regions. The available evidence shows that some of the NGOs funded by Spain are very active in demonizing Israel using “apartheid” and Nazi rhetoric, and delegitimize Israel’s self-defense as “war crimes.”

Israeli and Palestinian NGOs funded by Spain

1) Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) received **€105,000 (2009–2010)** for a program entitled “Spaces of Coexistence: Work and awareness camps meant to bring the Spanish youth closer to the problems of house demolitions and the human rights situation in the Palestinian Territories.” According to [media reports](#), the Spanish government subsidized 42 Spanish participants in ICAHD’s 2009 camp; [according to ICAHD](#), Spain had subsidized 18 individuals at the 2008 camp.

ICAHD is a radical NGO that promotes the demonization of Israel, supports [boycotts and divestment campaigns](#), and leads the “[Gaza boat](#)” publicity missions. Founder Jeff Halper advocates for the “one-state solution” that would eliminate Jewish self-determination rights. ICAHD rhetoric includes accusations of Israeli “[apartheid](#),” “[bloody and sadistic actions](#),”^[2] and “atrocities.”

2) Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) received **€98,347 (2009–2010)** officially for “[p]lanning for the Geopolitical future of Jerusalem as well as evaluating Israeli planning in Jerusalem from the National, district, and local levels from 1948 to 2030.”

ARIJ is a member of the [Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign](#) and [supports the global anti-Israel boycott movement](#). This Palestinian NGO employs the rhetoric of “[ethnic cleansing](#),” “transfer,” “land grab,” and “[colonization activities](#)”^[3] in its publications.

3) Breaking the Silence (BtS) was granted **€131,000 (2009–2010)** to “[r]educ[e] human rights violations in the Hebron Governorate through legal assistance and empowerment of the local Palestinian population.” In agreeing with NGO Monitor’s analysis, [Haaretz](#) concluded, “Breaking the Silence ... has a clear political agenda, and can no longer be classed as a ‘human rights organization.’”

BtS reports, aimed at international media outlets and university campuses, rely on anonymous “testimonies” to allege that the IDF commits war crimes. BtS also conducts [tours](#) in Hebron and environs for participants to “witness first hand the dire situation” where there is “[a reality of apartheid and a sort of ethnic cleansing](#).”^[4]

4) Geneva Initiative (H.L. Education) was awarded **€400,000 (through September 2010)** for “[i]ncreased support and assistance towards peace negotiations based on an Israeli-Palestinian two-state system.”

The Geneva Initiative, whose founders include former Israeli politician Yossi Beilin, advances policies that are contrary to official government decisions, and attempts to

influence the political process through active campaigning in Israeli elections, demonstrations, and influential briefings to media and political leaders.

5) Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) received **€100,000 for an 18-month program beginning in December 2009** for “advancement of housing rights and shelter for Palestinian residents of Area C in the West Bank.”[5]

ACRI uses delegitimization terms like “[apartheid](#)” and “institutionalized racism” (at a [Sabeel](#) conference). ACRI presented a [position paper](#) to Knesset members declaring that “to define the State of Israel as a ‘Jewish State’ in an obligatory article in the constitution is problematic.”[6]

6) Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR) reportedly was “[promised](#)” **€70,000**,[7] but project details and dates are not available.

RHR claims to “seek[] to prevent human rights violations in Israel and in areas for which Israel has taken responsibility” and to “have no affiliation with any political party or ideology.” In contrast, RHR is routinely involved in politicized activities such as protests and legal [advocacy](#) on behalf of the Palestinian narrative.

Spanish NGOs

1) The “[Group of NGOs for Palestine](#)” has an [AECID logo](#) on its website, although no financial information is available. The site’s section entitled “[Nakba](#)” presents an exclusively Palestinian narrative of the conflict: “With the war of 1948 began a process of territorial dispossession of the Palestinian population, which continued until this fateful course today. The first eviction of the Palestinian population Zionist militias carried out, causing the mass exodus of 750,000 Palestinians and Palestinians became refugees ... the fateful day of defeat, the slaughter and forced exile.”

This site also [promotes](#) the [Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign](#) (PGAAWC), a framework that [aims](#) to “focus[] upon stopping and dismantling the Apartheid Wall, and resisting Israeli occupation and colonization.”[8]

2) [Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberty](#) (MPDL), a [member](#) of the [Group of NGOs for Palestine](#), claims that 74.87% of its revenue in 2008 came from “[national public organizations](#)” (Organismos Publicos Nacionates) and that 16% of its “investments” go to the Middle East.

MPDL is a major supporter of political warfare against Israel. In an [editorial](#) on the situation in Gaza, this NGO alleged that “[t]he responsibility for the truce maintenance ... falls, ultimately, on the Israeli Government,” referencing the Israeli “massacre of civilians.” The head of the MPDL “mission” in “Palestine” wrote a very partisan report in the [Middle East Newsletter](#), alleging that “[t]he Erez terminal is a shame that violates international law and ... every day, Palestinians and other parts of the world feel violated their fundamental rights and freedom [sic].”

MPDL [partners](#) with the Women’s Affairs Technical Committee, which uses “[apartheid](#)” rhetoric and termed the Gaza conflict a “[a war of extermination](#).” MPDL also [accuses](#) Israel of “**collective punishment** against the Palestinian population”

(emphasis added) and [partners](#) with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, which uses demonization rhetoric to delegitimize Israel (“[massacres](#)” in Gaza, “[ghetto](#)” and “[apartheid](#)” in the West Bank).

3) In 2008, the [Madrid-based Foundation for Sustainable Development](#) (FUNDESO) listed AECID as the main sponsor for its project entitled “Improving socio-economic capacity of farmers affected by the [wall of separation](#).”

4) In 2008, [Solidaridad en Accion](#) began a project in cooperation with ICAHD (see above) that was “[approved by the Spanish Agency of International Development Cooperation \(AECI\)](#).”

Funding from Autonomous Communities and Regions

In addition to state funding for Spanish, Israeli, and Palestinian NGOs, governments of the autonomous communities in Spain also finance politicized NGOs.

1) **Middle East Without Wars and Oppression Network (MEWANDO)**, a coalition of Spanish NGOs that [recognizes](#) “the return of all [Palestinian] refugees” and “the liberation of all prisoners,” is [supported](#) by the **Department of Housing and Social Affairs of the Basque government**. According to the *Annual report of foreign affairs of the Basque Country in 2007*, “the government contributed **€199,995 during 2007 and 2008.**”^[9]

MEWANDO [accuses Israel](#) of a “Zionist campaign of ethnic cleansing in Palestine [which] has evolved and perfected itself without interruption since 1948” and promotes the “boycott of the Israeli apartheid state.” It organized the [Bilbao Initiative](#), a 2008 conference in Spain where Israel was accused of “apartheid, colonization and occupation,” and the 2009 Durban Review Conference (DRC) was chosen as a forum to further promote the coordinated demonization of Israel.

A 2008 [newsletter](#) prepared by MEWANDO, “within the framework of a project for raising awareness and coordinating initiatives of solidarity with Palestine by the civil society with the support of the direction of cooperation of the Basque government,” displays the Basque government logo. The newsletter repeatedly uses “apartheid,” “genocide,” “colonization,” “massacre,” and “ethnic cleansing” rhetoric, and features an inflammatory cartoon that depicts an African-American lynching victim and a Jewish child in the Holocaust as “Palestinians.”^[10]

2) [The Alternative Information Center](#) (AIC) is [supported](#) by the **Catalan government** (“through the help of Sodepau,” a Spanish NGO that describes itself as “working for Solidarity, Development, Peace and Human Rights in the Mediterranean, with special ties to Morocco, Algeria and Palestine”).

[AIC, a strong advocate for the Palestinian cause, refers](#) to the “Israeli occupation-regime” and the Arab-Israeli “colonial conflict.” AIC [opposes Arab normalization](#) with Israel, characterizing collaboration of a Palestinian NGO with the Israeli Peres Center for Peace as “politically unacceptable, and morally disgusting.” AIC also describes President Shimon Peres as “an enemy of the Palestinian people, of human rights and of peace.”^[11]

AIC officials often participate in biased United Nations frameworks; have accused Israel of “[genocide](#),” a “[policy of ethnic cleansing](#),” and “[apartheid](#)”; and have compared Israeli military and political officials to Nazis.

3) According to the [minutes of an EMHRN Working Group meeting](#) (October 16-18, 2009), the **municipality of Barcelona** provided €56,000 for the March 2010 [Russell Tribunal on Palestine](#). The Tribunal, with roots in Marxist and anti-Western ideology, [calls](#) for “existing legal actions and campaigns in the context of BDS to be stepped up and widened within the EU and globally” (i.e. “lawfare” and boycotts).

The Russell Tribunal “[Support Committee](#)” includes anti-Israel activists Jean Ziegler, John Dugard, and Richard Falk; representatives from the NGOs PCHR and ICAHD; and Goldstone Mission members Hila Jilani and Desmond Travers.

4) Between 2003 and 2008, **Junta de Andalucía** awarded [€ million to 18 NGO projects](#) in the “Palestinian territories.” NGOs that received grants include:

- [Asamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz-Andalucía](#), whose “Palestine” profile page [declares](#) that “hate speech prevails in Israeli media.”
- [Asociacion Europa de Cooperacion con Palestina](#), which referred to the “[massacre](#) of Gaza” in a news release.
- [Tres Culturas](#), [supported](#) by Junta de Andalucia, which hosted a [tribute](#) to radical Palestinian activist Edward Said.

Enanotes

[1] Boletín Oficial del Estado, “Anejo i - Dir. Cooperation Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe Cooperación África, Asia y Europa Oriental,” October 12, 2009. Available at: <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2009/10/12/pdfs/BOE-A-2009-16278.pdf>.

[2] “United Nations International Civil Society Conference Ends with Call to Oppose Israeli Military Operations.” United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), General Assembly, GA/PAL/1062. Available at: <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/4777fccc0019d8d285256a6a00691567/89ea706c718ae6c58525734f0050e442%21OpenDocument>.

[3] “ARIJ Monthly Report on the Israeli Colonization Activities in the West Bank & Gaza Strip,” Vol. 109, Aug. 2007. Available at: http://www.arij.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=352&Itemid=26 <=en.

[4] Occupation Magazine, “Upcoming Breaking the Silence tours of Hebron in Hebrew.” Available at: http://www.kibush.co.il/show_file.asp?num=32306. Translated from the original Hebrew.

[5] Information received from the Israel Registry for Non-Profits. Translated from the original Hebrew.

[6] ACRI, “The Association’s stance on the issue of defining the character of Israel in the constitution as a ‘Jewish democracy’” (Hebrew), March 21, 2007. Available at: <http://www.acri.org.il/Story.aspx?id=1487>.

[7] Jamie Geller and Herb Keinon, *Jerusalem Post*, “Spain helping to rebuild illegal homes in E. J’lem,” Aug. 10, 2009. Available at: http://209.85.129.132/search?q=cache:87_MHYbwUpYJ:www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite%3Fcid%3D1249418564583%26pagename%3DJPArticle%252FShowFull+http://ww

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[8] Stop the Wall, “Campaign Goals.” Available at: <http://stopthewall.org/news/1.shtml#CampaignParticipantsandOrganization>.

[9] Department of Housing and Social Affairs of the Basque government, “Anuario sobre la acción exterior de Euskadi 2007,” p. 283. Available at: http://www.gizaetxe.ejgv.euskadi.net/r50-7393/es/contenidos/informacion/anuario_aee_2005/es_anua2005/adjuntos/Anuario%20AAEE%20Euskadi%202007.doc.

[10] MEWANDO, “MEWANDO Newspaper English Version.” Available at: <http://www.mewando.org/mediareources/files/Documentos/Periodico%20NAKBA/MEWANDO%20NEWSPAPER%20ENGLISH%20VERSION.pdf>.

[11] Nassar Ibrahim, “The Case against Palestinian Normalization with Israel,” Sept. 4, 2007. Available at: <http://www.alternativenews.org/nassar-ibrahim/986-the-case-against-palestinian-normalizationwith-israel.html>.