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Swedish government funds anti-Semitic NGOs

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Gerald Steinberg , THE JERUSALEM POST

The **article in Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*** accusing Israeli soldiers of stealing and selling the organs of Palestinians is not a surprise or isolated aberration, but rather the result of a long campaign of anti-Israeli demonization, based on manufactured "evidence" repeated by Palestinian "eyewitnesses".

Applying the strategy adopted at the NGO forum of the 2001 UN Durban conference, the well-financed network of radical non-governmental organizations (NGOs) plays a major role in this demonization, and the Swedish government is a major source of funding. Expressions of modern anti-Semitism and blood libels are the logical results of this activity.

An NGO Monitor **research report on Swedish government funding**, published on June 29 2009, documented this pattern in detail, and warned of the incitement and anti-Semitic language being used routinely by these organizations. This systematic study examined over 20 major NGOs funded through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Diakonia, the multi-national NGO Development Center (NDC), and the Swedish Mission Council (SMR).

Many of these NGOs routinely accuse Israel of "genocide," "ethnic cleansing," and "apartheid," and some compare Israeli military and political officials to Nazis. This propaganda warfare is waged through the façade of "research" reports which routinely quote Palestinian "testimonies," taken and repeated without question. The path from this demonization to the blood libels of *Aftonbladet* is short and direct.

The Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), run by Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi, and receiving funds from the SMR framework, is a prominent example. Barghouthi referred to the Gaza conflict as a "horrendous massacre," and used terms like "ghetto," and "apartheid" on a radio program. PMRS refers to the security barrier as the "apartheid wall," and claimed that Israel employs a "racist ideology" and inflicts "collective punishment" on the Palestinians.

Similar language is **found in the publications and statements** of the radical Israel-based Alternative Information Center (AIC), which received 300,000 Krona (\$42,000) in 2008, Palestinian-based Al Haq (SEK 3 million, as part of Diakonia's IHL program), and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (SEK 900,000). The central role of PHR-I officials in the campaigns accusing Israeli doctors of torture and other forms of heinous immorality, resulted in a decision by the Israel Medical Association to sever relations.

SIDA money also goes to the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), and Jerusalem Center for Women (JWC), which demonize Israel with the

rhetoric of "apartheid," "ethnic cleansing," and "massacres." This language is repeated in NGO reports and and press statements, which are then reprinted in the media and amplified in the United Nations Human Rights Council.

NGOs supported by Sweden are also among the leaders in the effort to rewrite the history of the conflict in order to portray Israel as an "evil empire" and the world's worst violator of human rights. The Palme Center, run by the Social Democratic Party and leading trade unions, accuses Israel of "provok[ing] the al-Aqsa rising and the 'Second Intifada,'" and "disproportionate violence against civilians, unlawful executions and torture." The fighting in Gaza is also blamed solely on "the provocative Israeli occupation," rather than on the over 8,000 rockets launched by Hamas, or other forms of terror. The history of Arab rejectionism, the wars designed to "wipe Israel off the map", and the decades of massive Palestinian terror, are erased as part of this demonization.

Similarly, a Sabeel project, "The Nakba Memory, Reality and Beyond," used SIDA funding (SEK 540,000) "to commemorate the Nakba of 1948". Sabeel is a leader of the church divestment campaign, and its director, Naim Ateek, employs anti-Semitic themes and imagery in sermons promoting "Palestinian Liberation Theology."

Diakonia's "International Humanitarian Law" project and other Swedish government funding are behind the abuse of legal frameworks to demonize Israel. The "lawfare" movement uses courts in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand to accuse Israelis of war crimes and similar charges. While all of the cases heard to date have been dismissed, the main purpose of this effort is to reinforce the incitement and hatred directed against Israelis through the rhetoric of morality and human rights. Using Swedish funding, lawfare cases are promoted by Al Haq and the Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), which, like other such groups, accuses Israelis of "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity."

When NGO Monitor sent the draft report to the Swedish embassy in Tel Aviv and government officials in Stockholm, they refused to comment or to engage in a discussion of the implications of these reprehensible activities. Perhaps now, after the *Aftonbladet* report has highlighted the results of this demonization, they will reconsider and stop this destructive misuse of public funds.

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