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Time to hold these groups to account

By **Gerald Steinberg**, January 13, 2011 **Share** 0 tweet

Politicised NGOs funded by European governments have powerful impacts on Israeli domestic politics and on the conflict. For many years, their influence was protected from debate but, last week, the Knesset voted to establish a committee to examine this controversial issue.

A credible and non-partisan evaluation of foreign government funding for political NGOs is long overdue. Whether the Knesset framework will meet these criteria remains to be seen.

The focus will be on Yesh Din, Breaking the Silence, Adallah and other groups that promote demonisation, "war crimes" allegations, and support for BDS and lawfare cases.

The evidence, as published by NGO Monitor, indicates that European government officials funnel an estimated 100 million euros annually to Israeli and Palestinian political NGOs, without transparency on decision-making or evaluation. This funding is a highly guarded security secret in the EU, and both taxpayers and Israelis, whose lives are directly affected by the NGO activities, are denied the "right to know".

NGO officials are not subject to polls, checks and balances, or fact-checking. And their allegations are accepted as fact by journalists and in UN documents, such as Richard Goldstone's indictment. This "evidence" is used to label Israeli leaders as "war criminals", to promote delegitimisation, and to manipulate the political debate. For most Israelis, this is a serious threat.

Gerald Steinberg is president of NGO Monitor

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