
Submission of NGO Monitor to the Report on the Impact of Counter-Terrorism on Peacemaking, Peacebuilding, Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Introduction

NGO Monitor, a project of the Institute for NGO Research,¹ an organization in Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC since 2013, presents this submission for the preparation of the report on the Impact of Counter-Terrorism on Peacemaking, Peacebuilding, Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention and Resolution.

For nearly 20 years, NGO Monitor has studied and analyzed the issues of terrorism, armed conflict, transparency, and accountability measures within the human rights and humanitarian NGO community. Human rights must be observed at all times, even when trying to protect against terrorism – itself, one of the greatest violations of human rights. Civil society has a vital role to play in ensuring that human rights are protected, even in times of extreme violence and crisis. In parallel, civil society, particularly those members that claim to promote humanitarian and human rights goals, must also be involved in combating terrorism.

It is important to stress that the claims made by organizations regarding support for human rights or humanitarian objectives do not exempt them from acting to advance those goals. Too often, these groups use the cover of humanitarian aid or “human rights” work to avoid self-criticism or independent accountability.

Indeed, as we have extensively documented, in some cases, humanitarian and human rights NGOs are also enablers of terrorism. This can occur through the facilitation of aid diversion, participation in terrorist acts, or by campaigning to weaken and dismantle the carefully constructed counter-terrorism architecture, particularly measures to block financing for terror

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groups – one of the most effective (and least deadly) means to prevent terror attacks. Some organizations also lobby for humanitarian and human rights NGOs to be broadly exempt from counter-terror regulations.

This submission highlights the ways in which these organizations seek to hamper counter-terror efforts and why we urge the Special Rapporteur against the promotion of any broad exemptions or immunity for humanitarian or human rights organizations from counter-terror financing regulations.

Humanitarian and Human Rights Work Must not be used to Provide Immunity from Counter-Terror Regulations

Terrorism impacts every corner of the globe and kills and injures tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of civilians every year. Terrorist organizations are highly sophisticated. They utilize existing financial and criminal networks, and frequently operate invisibly using innocuous covers in order to implement attacks.

Unfortunately, humanitarian and human rights organizations are frequently used by terrorist organizations as a means to obtain funding and operate covertly. This can include infiltrating existing organizations, establishing “human rights” groups, or demanding “protection” so that human rights and humanitarian groups can operate.

For instance, on July 26, 2016, the Washington Post reported that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) suspended hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to Syria, in response to reports of fraud and aid diversion.² In explaining the decision in testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, USAID Inspector General Ann Calvaresi Barr stated, “Despite our goodwill, bad characters have taken advantage of the complex situation for personal gain, ultimately denying Syrian people the food, clothing, health care and other aid they urgently need.”

Similarly, on August 4, 2016, the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) publicly accused Mohammed El-Halabi – manager of operations in Gaza of the international humanitarian NGO World Vision – of funneling 60% of World Vision’s Gaza budget to Hamas. According to the indictment against him, El-Halabi used fictitious humanitarian projects and agricultural

² https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/suspecting-fraud-us-suspends-some-syrian-aid-programs/2016/07/26/9ad4c600-5285-11e6-88eb-7dda4e2f2aec_story.html

associations to act as a cover for the hijacking of monies and materials to Hamas.³ On June 15, 2022, the Be'er Sheva District Court convicted El-Halabi for diverting aid money and resources from World Vision to Hamas⁴.

Likewise, in October 2014, the Daily Beast reported that many humanitarian NGOs operating in Syria and Iraq were found to have actively cooperated with, employed, or paid bribes to ISIS in order to continue working in territory under the Islamic State's control.⁵ Aid was diverted away from its intended recipients in these countries for use by ISIS or to be sold for cash in service of ISIS' war effort.

Moreover, numerous UN reports have documented the large quantities of aid that have been hijacked by the Somali terrorist group Al-Shabaab.⁶ These claims are consistent with revelations in 2013 that international NGOs like Action Contre le Faim (ACF) negotiated with Al-Shabaab in order to operate in territory controlled by the group.

Nevertheless, a disturbing trend has developed in the humanitarian NGO sector promoting the concept of the "humanitarian imperative" arguing that organizations providing humanitarian aid should be exempt from counter-terror regulations.

"Humanitarian Imperative"

One of the most notable examples is a 2017 position paper issued by Chatham House,⁷ criticizing British and international financial regulations that mitigate the risks of corruption and aid diversion in NGO-run humanitarian operations. Specifically, the authors decry the ways in which banks, in order to comply with various national and international anti-terror financing laws, have avoided transferring funds and offering financial services to NGOs active in conflict areas where "Non-state Armed Groups" (read: terrorists and militias) operate.

The authors contend that these protocols hamper the ability of agencies to deliver humanitarian aid and are unnecessary, asserting that "Humanitarian NGOs [non-governmental organizations] generally accept the need for regulation and due diligence."

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/05/world/middleeast/world-vision-hamas.html?emc=edit_tnt_20160804&nid=2407257&tntemail0=y

⁴ <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/verdict-mohammad-el-halabi-world-vision>

⁵ <https://www.thedailybeast.com/us-humanitarian-aid-going-to-isis>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/10/aid-somalia-stolen-un-report>

⁷ https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/CHHJ5596_NSAG_iv_research_paper_1708_WEB.pdf

Moreover, the report demands that the UK “must make greater efforts to include exemptions for humanitarian action.

The Chatham House-RUSI paper appears to argue that a certain amount of aid diversion should be expected and tolerated: “It is of course virtually impossible for humanitarian NGOs to ensure that funds or resources will not end up in the hands of a designated individual or NSAG [non-state armed groups], particularly when operating in conflict zones, or in or near areas where designated NSAGs are based or operate”; “The government must also determine whether the delivery of aid is more important than the risk that some aid may be diverted.”

These positions echo the “humanitarian imperative” ideology adopted by many NGOs, a concept that minimizes the significance of terrorism and complicity with it, and blindly prioritizes humanitarian aid above all other concerns.

Yet, no matter the ostensible purity of their motives, this is not an excuse to be exempt from basic anti-terror requirements. In fact, such ideology promotes the breakdown of rule of law and encourages terrorist actors to take advantage. Like all actors, humanitarian organizations must calibrate and temper their activities in accordance with the dangers inherent in operating in conflict zones, including the risks of aid diversion. Failure to be cognizant of the adverse effects resulting from aid diversion and the absence of due diligence increases the dangers to vulnerable populations, and strengthens terrorist elements and other NSAGs involved in violent conflict. These factors can also result in prolonging conflict, ultimately leading to greater harm and suffering.

It is also a fallacy to claim that humanitarian NGOs “generally accept the need for regulation and due diligence.” Our work, as demonstrated in the PFLP Case Study below, shows that is highly inaccurate.

In addition, humanitarian groups are often entrusted with hundreds of millions of dollars annually in taxpayer funds, pursuant to the interests and policy desires of the democratic polities providing such monies. Like all recipients of public funding, these groups should be subject to fundamental accountability mechanisms and transparency requirements. The answer to the problem of aid diversion must not be allowed to be self-serving non-binding claims and less oversight of private actors.

Human Rights Defenders

Like humanitarian organizations, there is a growing call by human rights NGOs demanding immunity from counter-terrorism regulations, based on their self-definition as “human rights

defenders.” Indeed, the human rights NGO sector is subject to even less oversight than the humanitarian NGO sector. There are no consistent definitions or institutions that govern the designation of “human rights defenders” or monitoring mechanisms to ensure the appellation is accurate. In other words, almost any organization could claim that it is operating in the sphere of human rights and therefore, entitled to special conditions not available to other organizations or individuals. This standard is readily subject to manipulation, unworkable, and must not serve as the basis for exemptions from counter-terror legislation.

The Need for Governmental Due Diligence

A third area of concern is the lack of due diligence over humanitarian/human rights NGO funding. Many officials from national governments, European Union, and the UN ignore counter-terror regulations and fail to conduct appropriate due diligence when determining grant awards for organizations claiming the mantle of humanitarian aid or human rights. This failure can have disastrous consequences, as will be examined in the following case study.

Case Study: Palestinian NGOs and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

NGO Monitor has extensively documented the ties between at least 10 Palestinian NGOs claiming to promote human rights to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist organization. The organizations receive millions of dollars annually from the European Union, the UN, and many governments (primarily European). In August 2019, a PFLP terror cell carried out a bombing against Israeli civilians, murdering 17-year-old Rina Shnerb, and injuring her father and brother.

Many of the perpetrators were senior officials in “human rights” NGOs.

Founded by George Habash in 1967, the PFLP is a Palestinian, secular, Marxist-Leninist terror group, originally supported by the Soviet Union and China. The PFLP is designated as a terrorist organization by governments around the world, including the US, EU, Canada, and Israel. Since its inception, the terror group has been involved in suicide bombings, shootings, and assassinations, among other attacks targeting civilians. The group was well-known for hijacking commercial airlines in the 1960s and 1970s, involving thousands of civilians in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and is responsible for countless deaths and injuries.

The PFLP engages in a number of politically oriented functions meant to foster an image of legitimacy and bolster the group’s ideological and military goals. As stated in a 1993 USAID-engaged audit, “most major Palestinian institutions, especially in the health, agricultural, and

industrial sectors, are affiliated with one of the principal factions,” such as the PFLP, “of the Palestine Liberation Organizations.” The USAID-engaged audit affirms that the PFLP and other factions “**have built a relatively sophisticated network of grassroots institutions** in the West Bank and Gaza... Each significant political actor has attempted to build an institutional base of support or control in the occupied territories...” (emphasis added)

The logic of creating a cluster of civil society organizations is consistent with the PFLP’s operating principles, including utilizing the political sphere to influence the military. For instance, in *The PFLP’s Changing Role in the Middle East* (2014), Harold M. Cubert writes that “The PFLP seeks to create a system in which it can move its members between military and political tasks interchangeably” adding that the group “sees itself as a living organism whose goal it is to reverse Israel’s establishment and to acquire for the Palestinians the rights which it feels they have always deserved. Each of the PFLP’s components is essential to its existence and each is given equal importance.” In other words, the PFLP supplements its terrorism with civil society activities, to promote its goals and gain political support.

The same assessment of the PFLP’s political dynamic is shared by its own members. Khaled Barakat, a PFLP “leader” and speaker for the PFLP-linked NGO Samidoun, explained that “the students and the labor movement and children and women from kindergarten all the way to the military resistance is one national liberation movement and every component of it is important.” A 2019 indictment of Abdul Razeq Farraj notes that another PFLP member Itiraf Hajaj Rimawi (both senior NGO officials) would be responsible for the PFLP’s “university and school activities.”

Another way the PFLP attempts to gain legitimacy is by co-opting the discourse of human rights and international law. The terrorist group projects a “halo,” through which outside observers associate the terror group with positive progressive values instead of violence. Moreover, their rights-based rhetoric serves to justify attacks against civilians, obscuring its ultimate goal – i.e. the elimination of Israel. Instead of advocating for universal human rights, these NGOs regularly participate in PFLP events and/or advocate on behalf of PFLP terrorists.

To promote its objectives, the PFLP has created or associated with multiple “human rights” NGOs. These NGOs are populated with staff, founders, board members, general assembly members, and senior officials who are also active, and often senior, members in the PFLP. Some of these individuals are employed in financial positions at the NGOs, calling into question funding oversight by the EU, the UN, European governments and other donors, and increasing the risk of diversion of public funds to an internationally designated terrorist group.

Murder of Rena Shnerb

The August 2019 murder of 17-year old Rena Shnerb exemplifies the damage caused when government officials fail to conduct due diligence and ignore counter-terrorism requirements. It also demonstrates why humanitarian/human rights NGOs cannot police themselves on the core issue of counter-terrorism.

On December 19, 2019, the Israel Security Agency (Shabak) announced that it had uncovered a 50-person PFLP terror network operating in the West Bank.⁸ ⁹Among those in the network were individuals arrested for carrying out the August 23, 2019 bombing attack murdering 17-year-old Rina Shnerb and injuring her father and brother.

The Shabak statement named multiple leading PFLP figures, several of whom at the moment of arrest, or in the recent past, held senior positions in Palestinian NGOs – groups that receive substantial funding from the EU and other governments and were long-identified as linked to the PFLP. Critically, these individuals were employed by the NGOs as accountants and financial directors, positions in which they would be responsible for managing grant monies provided by the EU and other donors. Among those arrested were:

Samer Arbid, Union of Agricultural Work Committees' (UAWC) “senior staff,” accountant, and previously UAWC’s “financial officer.” Arbid is currently standing trial for commanding the PFLP terror cell that carried out the August 23, 2019 bombing attack. According to the indictment against him, Arbid prepared and detonated the explosive device.¹⁰ In August 2020, the PFLP issued a statement¹¹ referring to Arbid as a

⁸ Ynet, “The Shin Bet revealed: Rene Schenarb killers - part of a terrorist infrastructure that included 50 terrorists” (Hebrew), December 18, 2019 : <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5644752,00.html>

⁹ Official Journal of the European Union, “Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/20”: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020D0020&qid=1581336812001&from=EN>

¹⁰ NGO Monitor, Indictment against Samer Arbid (Hebrew): <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/nm/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91-%D7%90%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%9D%D7%A1%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%A8-%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%99%D7%93-compressed.pdf>

¹¹ PFLP, “The PFLP mourns the [death of] fighter Alice Razzouq, the mother of the prisoner and commander Samer Arbid – one of the heroes of the Bubeen operation [the August 2019 terror attack in which Rena Shnerb was murdered and her father and brother wounded],” August 30, 2020:

-<https://pflp.ps/post/19504/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B9%D9%8A-D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%84%D8%A9-D8%A3%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%B1%D8%B2%D9%88%D9%82-D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A9-D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%>

“prisoner and commander,” and “one of the heroes of the Bubeen operation” — referring to the August 2019 bombing. Arbid has a long history of terror-related activity and has been in and out of jail on terrorist offenses for nearly 20 years.

Walid Hanatsheh (Abu Ras), Health Work Committee (HWC)’s finance and administration manager,¹² was arrested in October 2019 and is allegedly the leader of PFLP terror operations.¹³ In this capacity, he is accused of commanding Samer Arbid. According to an Israeli media report, Hanatsheh financed the August 23 bombing.¹⁴ In addition to his position at HWC, Hanatsheh is also listed as a member of the board of directors at the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO).¹⁵ Following his arrest, the PFLP labeled Hanatsheh a “leader in the Popular Front”¹⁶ (See Hanatsheh’s indictment¹⁷ for more information). Like Arbid, he too has a long history of involvement in terrorist acts. In 2005, for instance, during Israeli High Court deliberations, Hanatsheh was defined as “a senior activist in the PFLP.” The Court further cites security sources indicating that “the status of the respondent [Hanatsheh] in the hierarchy and the **risk that he will be integrated into a senior position in military activity in the PFLP is significant**” [HC] 6845/05] (emphasis added).¹⁸

D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B9%

¹² HWC, “Health Work Committee Condemns the Arrest of its Financial and Administrative Director,” October 3, 2019, <https://www.hwc-pal.org/page.php?id=Jr9aLIFbYCa277692AgrdiRh2wFh>

¹³ Shabbak, “Exposition of widespread terrorist infrastructure of the Popular Front in the Judea and Samaria” -December 18, 2019: <https://www.shabak.gov.il/publications/Pages/%D7%97%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%AA-D7%AA%D7%A9%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%A8-D7%A0%D7%A8%D7%97%D7%91%D7%AA-%D7%A9%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%97%D7%96%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%AA%D7%A9%D7%A4%D7%A2%D7%9C%D7%94-%D7%91%D7%90%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A9-.aspx>

¹⁴ Mako, “Uncover of a 50-person terror network responsible for the terror attack in which Rina Shnerb was murdered” (Hebrew), 18/12/2018: https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2019_q4/Article-dff558c3b681f61026.htm?Partner=searchResults

¹⁵ PNGO, Board Members, (archived on January 1, 2020): <https://web.archive.org/web/20200101091319/http://www.pngo.net/board-members/>

¹⁶ PFLP, <https://pflp.ps/post/18783/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%85-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B2%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87>

¹⁷ NGO Monitor, Indictment against Walid Hanatsheh (Hebrew): <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/nm/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91-%D7%90%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%9D-%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%93-%D7%97%D7%A0%D7%90%D7%AA%D7%A9%D7%94-compressed.pdf>

¹⁸ Pskadin, High Court of Justice [6845-05] : <https://www.pskadin.co.il/Court/%D7%A4%D7%A1%D7%A7-%D7%93%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%91%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%A7-%D7%91%D7%92%22%D7%A5-6845-05#.XgNXkWQzaUm>

Abdel Razeq Farraj, UAWC “Finance and Administration Director”: According to his indictment¹⁹, Razeq Farraj held a senior PFLP post and authorized the August 23, 2019 bombing. He is currently standing trial. According to Amnesty International, Farraj was arrested several times and “served a six-year sentence in an Israeli prison after being convicted of affiliation with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.”²⁰

Counter-Terror Clauses in Funding Contracts

In the aftermath of the murder, and the identification of at least 8 senior NGO officials linked to the PFLP, it was clear that the EU’s NGO due diligence was inadequate. The officials could no longer rely on self-reporting from NGO grantees to ensure that they were not involved in terrorism.

In this respect, a new requirement in EU contracts with NGOs, introduced in 2019, is essential: “Grant beneficiaries and contractors must ensure that there is no detection of subcontractors, natural persons, including participants to workshops and/or trainings and recipients of financial support to third parties, in the lists of EU restrictive measures.”²¹

On May 19, 2020, European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi stated that he had instructed the heads of EU delegations to Israel and West Bank/ Gaza to “look deep” into allegations that some EU funds go to terror-linked or -supporting NGOs, declaring that such funding “will not be tolerated.”²²

Again, on November 6, 2020, Olivér Várhelyi, the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement answered a written parliamentary question on “EU funding to persons/organisations linked to EU-designated terror groups”, noting:

¹⁹ NGO Monitor, Indictment against Abdel Razeq Farraj (Hebrew): <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/nm/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/אגודת-אישום-עבד-אלרזק-פראג>compressed.pdf-

²⁰ Amnesty International, “Palestinian NGP worker released,” August 16, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1589462018ENGLISH.pdf>:2018

²¹ <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/eu-diplomats-capitulate-to-palestinian-pressure-on-terror-regulations/>

²² Olivér Várhelyi, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, during an AFET meeting: “On how to ensure that our financial support does not get to terrorists, or terrorist , or organizations that are supporting terrorists, or organizations who are supporting terrorist organizations, we have received a number of requests from the Israeli authorities in that regard also from the public in Israel. I took immediate action, I asked both the heads of delegations in Tel Aviv but also in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to look into the matter. They will have to look deep, and if there is any concern, any concern, we will act immediately. There is no terrorist financing from EU funds, as long as there are EU funds, this can not happen, this will not be tolerated, and if it happens, it will be rectified. And I will see it to it myself that it is done and delivered.” (18.35’.50”- 18.37’.18”) - https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/afet-committee_20200519-1630-COMMITTEE-AFET_vd

The EU is conducting a critically-minded review of the safeguards in place (as well as of their efficiency and effectiveness) that protect EU funds against misuse or deviation for unintended purposes, including terrorism or incitement, in Palestine. The safeguards must ensure that the EU does not support any entities, individuals or groups affiliated, linked or supporting terrorism or incitement. In parallel, the EU is looking into individual cases of alleged misuse or deviation of EU funds in Palestine.²³

However, according to media reports, during a December 20, 2019 meeting with EU officials, representatives from PNGO “refused to sign an EU grant request²⁴ and continues to aggressively campaign against greater oversight. This refusal occurred even though one of its board members was indicted for the murder of Rena Shnerb, many of its member organizations are associated with the PFLP, and many individuals at those member organizations are currently standing trial for the Shnerb murder or for other PFLP terrorist activities.

Similarly, in January 2022, the Dutch Foreign Minister announced that the Netherlands will cease all funding to the Union of Agricultural Works Committee (UAWC).²⁵ In a letter to the Dutch parliament, Development Cooperation Minister Tom de Bruijn and Foreign Affairs Minister Ben Knapen wrote that an independent investigation commissioned by the government in 2021 found that **34 UAWC employees had ties to the PFLP in 2007-2020, some holding leadership positions in the terrorist group concurrent to their employment at UAWC.** The ministers added that “the large number of board members of UAWC with a dual mandate is particularly worrying.” Following an appeal by seven UN Special Rapporteurs to reinstate the funding, the Dutch government wrote, “The strong findings about individual-level ties between the UAWC and the PFLP, and the UAWC’s lack of candour about the situation before or during the review, constitute serious concern and sufficient reason in the Government’s view to terminate its funding to the UAWC’s activities.”²⁶

There are several lessons from the PFLP NGO Case Study. First, NGOs claiming to promote human rights or self-proclaiming as human rights defenders may be acting in ways that are the antithesis of human rights. Second, NGOs cannot be entrusted to self-report potential risks

²³ European Parliament, “EU funding to persons/organisations linked to EU-designated terror groups,” https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-003051_EN.html

²⁴ <https://www.jns.org/palestinian-ngos-reject-eu-assistance-over-refusal-to-renounce-terrorism-ties>

²⁵ <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/dutch-govt-halts-funds-to-ngo-linked-to-terrorists>

²⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Response-of-the-Government-of-the-Netherlands-to-the-UN-experts.pdf>

or violations; the NGOs appointed individuals with long-standing records of terrorist activity to senior positions at the NGOs, including financial positions. Third, it is unclear whether EU or other funders knew of these extensive terror ties prior to the Shnerb murder. Either way, it indicates a failure of due diligence processes in place at the time.

Conclusion

Human rights must be observed in at all times. Yet, when crafting counter-terrorism regulations, policy makers cannot blindly adopt the worldview advanced by NGOs that believe that their singular conception of humanitarian aid or human rights trump all other considerations, be them security-related, political, diplomatic, legal, or otherwise.

Driven by their own agendas and interests, these organizations may be exacerbating existing problems, influencing a conflict, or even acting immorally by materially aiding deeply problematic actors. Any meaningful appraisal of a given humanitarian situation will consider multiple factors and outcomes, not simply those related directly to aid distribution or done under a claim of advancing human rights. NGOs can play an important role in alleviating suffering, but, simply put, they are not and should not be above the law.

Entities seeking support from governments must prove that they are capable of and committed to upholding the requisite values and standards, particularly as relates to the sensitive and critical area of anti-terror financing. Far from weakening their resolve, donor governments must adopt firm measures to confront a wide range of threats to the integrity of their funding.