

Israeli Propaganda Organisations

UN Watch

The Geneva-based UN Watch, an accredited NGO that was granted special consultative status at the UN's Economic and Social Council, was established in 1993 by Morris Abram, former permanent US Representative to the UN in Geneva and honorary president of the American Jewish Committee. On 1 January 2001, AJC (EIN no. 13-5563393) assumed full control of the organisation through an agreement with the World Jewish Congress.⁷⁵

At the time, AJC noted that UN Watch's main focus was 'on monitoring the continuing discriminatory treatment of Israel in the UN system and attitudes toward Jews in the world body, as well as those matters which concern American interests'.⁷⁶ However, it has since obscured this mission among several others. Indeed, according to its website, 'UN Watch is foremost concerned with the just application of UN Charter principles.'⁷⁷

Since its acquisition by AJC, UN Watch has waged several campaigns against UN officials critical of Israel. It lobbied against UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen for his perceived bias towards Palestinians, accusing him of unprofessionalism for his 2003 statement that Jenin refugee camp 'residents lived through a human catastrophe that has few parallels in recent history'.⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch had issued a report in 2002 charging that: 'during their incursion into the Jenin refugee camp, Israeli forces committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, some amounting *prima facie* to war crimes.'⁷⁹

The NGO also took a hostile stance towards Jean Ziegler, who served as the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food from 2000 to 2008. In October 2005, it published a report on what it called Ziegler's 'Anti-American Bias', including his criticisms of Israel.⁸⁰

UN Watch's own biases are clear: its Executive Director Hillel Neuer tweeted in 2014, during Israel's military campaign in Gaza, that the people of Gaza and Israel were suffering because the 'radical Islamist ruler Hamas is turning Gaza into a giant suicide bomb'.⁸¹

UN Watch's international advisory board includes several members who have expressed hostile attitudes towards Muslims and Islam.⁸² For example, Swiss journalist Jean-Claude Buhner responded to a controversial Swiss Muslim convert's support of Neo-Nazis by writing: 'This is tantamount to a marriage between the swastika and the (Islamic) crescent'.⁸³ He also once suggested that using the concept of Islamophobia was an affront to freedom of speech.⁸⁴

Former Chess champion Garry Kasparov, also a board member, recently penned an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* arguing that Islamists were waging a 'global war on modernity,' setting 'the time machine to the Dark Ages'.⁸⁵ In a much earlier op-ed, he said that Palestinians refugees do not deserve the right to return because they willingly left in 1948 'as a result of the Arabs' own enmity for Israel'.⁸⁶ He then went on to compare their plight with that of German occupation forces in Eastern Europe after World War II.

Other advisory board members are linked to anti-Muslim groups, like Lord David Trimble, former First Minister of Northern Ireland, who is one of the founding signatories of the Henry Jackson Society,⁸⁷ as well as the Friends of Israel Initiative.⁸⁸

Up until 2007, AJC reported its annual contributions to UN Watch, which it cites on IRS forms as an affiliate, in its itemised list of donations. Between 2003-2007, AJC reported grants to UN Watch totalling \$1,844,083. However, AJC subsequently changed the way it reported its grantmaking (which dropped from \$2,027,761 in 2007 to \$283,739 in 2008), reporting the funds given to UN Watch inconsistently as a transaction with related organisations.

It is not clear whether or not UN Watch employees are included amongst the 300 or so who benefit from AJC's approximately \$25 million annual budget for salaries, other compensation, and employee benefits in the US and overseas. In 2013, AJC's executive director, David Harris, received total compensation of \$886,482.

The IRS form of the US-based fundraising arm of UN Watch makes no mention of Israel in its explanation of the organisation's mission. Established in 2012, UN Watch – USA has so far raised \$862,412. Its president is Alfred H. Moses, who served as president of AJC until 2012.

In a 2008 speech, Moses claimed that calling for the return of Palestinian refugees amounted to the delegitimisation of Israel, and firmly denied any connection between Zionism and racism.⁸⁹ He also opposed equating anti-Semitism with Islamophobia, seemingly justifying the latter by pointing out that, 'intolerance breeds intolerance'.⁹⁰

NGO Monitor

NGO Monitor is an Israeli organisation founded in 2007 to police civil society in Israel. According to *Haaretz* newspaper, NGO Monitor has engaged in a 'McCarthyite' campaign against progressive non-governmental organisations, for example the New Israel Fund and *+972 Magazine*.⁹¹ It has waged a particularly aggressive effort against Zochrot, an Israeli group that recognises the Nakba and supports the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland.⁹² It also focuses on rebutting criticism of Israel by international human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.⁹³

While NGO Monitor's campaign is to target the funders of civil society groups promoting civil rights in both Israel and Palestine, *Haaretz* reports that it receives thousands of shekels from anonymous sources, including the quasi-government Jewish Agency.⁹⁴

In 2009, Ron Dermer, then advisor to the Israeli prime minister, initiated legislation to ban the foreign funding of Israeli human rights organisations, which ultimately stalled. However, according to Didi Remez of *Haaretz*, Gerald Steinberg, the president of NGO Monitor, subsequently took over the initiative in partnership with the Institute for Zionist Strategies, led by Israel Harel, a founder of the Gush Emunim settler movement.⁹⁵

Further explaining, Remez notes that NGO Monitor 'is a partisan operation that suppresses its perceived ideological adversaries through the sophisticated use of McCarthyite techniques – blacklisting, guilt by association and selective filtering of facts.'⁹⁶ It reportedly had a budget of more than 2 million shekels, or about \$530,000, in 2010.⁹⁷

The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA), headed by Dore Gold, lists NGO Monitor as one of its online publications,⁹⁸ giving it several links to the Israeli government. Gold is a former advisor to Israeli Prime Ministers Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon,⁹⁹ and Lenny Ben-David, JCPA's director of publications, previously served as former deputy chief of mission in the Israeli Embassy in Washington.¹⁰⁰

JCPA also runs the Institute for Contemporary Affairs (ICA), a five-year, \$1 million programme founded jointly with the Wechsler Family Foundation (EIN no. 04-3533126),¹⁰¹ which funds the Jewish News Service (JNS) agency, a right-wing wire service launched in 2011 as an alternative to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency,¹⁰² in addition to the AJC, Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting (CAMERA), a pro-Israel media watch organisation, Central Fund of Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center and Middle East Forum (MEF).

According to the JCPA website, ICA 'provides a unique venue that enables the foreign press and foreign diplomats in Israel to receive briefings by leading Israeli experts from the military, the political world, academia, and the media on security issues, Israeli strategy, regional players, and the war on terrorism.'¹⁰³ ICA has hosted the following: Minister Natan Sharansky; Major General Giora Eiland, formerly the head of Military Planning and the Prime Minister's National Security Advisor; Major General Amos Gilad, Defence Minister advisor; Brigadier General Yossi Kuperwasser, Head of Assessment of Military Intelligence, MK Ephraim Sneh, formerly Deputy Minister of Defense and others.

ICA's Steering Committee includes both Gold and Steinberg, the latter who has his own government connections. Steinberg states on his CV that he sits on the steering committee for the Office of the Prime Minister's Forum on Anti-Semitism and is a consultant for the Israeli government.¹⁰⁴ An online biography also states that he is 'a consultant to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Security Council'.¹⁰⁵

Selected NGO Monitor advisory council members include the following:¹⁰⁶

- **Elliott Abrams:** the deputy national security advisor during the George W. Bush administration. He is currently a director of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), and is listed as an author at the Gatestone Institute¹⁰⁷ and an outside expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP).¹⁰⁸
- **Alan Dershowitz:** professor of law at Harvard Law School and also listed as an author at the Gatestone Institute.¹⁰⁹ He has recently made anti-Muslim statements, for example that 'the only people today who are threatening violence against others for expressing political views are radical Muslims.'¹¹⁰ Earlier this year, he claimed that 'violent anti-Semitism is all coming from Islamic extremists'.¹¹¹
- **Douglas Murray:** British neoconservative activist known for his anti-Muslim views. In 2006, he stated that 'conditions for Muslims in Europe should be made harder across the board'.¹¹² He founded the Centre for Social Cohesion and is now associate director of the Henry Jackson Society, as well as an expert at the Gatestone Institute.¹¹³
- **R. James Woolsey:** former director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He is currently chairperson of the conservative think tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD),¹¹⁴ sits on the board of advisors for WINEP,¹¹⁵ and is an international patron of the Henry Jackson Society.¹¹⁶

Figure 2. Leading figures involved in the pro-Israel and anti-Islam campaign in the US and UK¹¹⁷



The Centre for Jewish Community Studies (CJCS) is the tax-exempt US fundraising arm of the JCPA. Between 2009-2013, it raised \$8,868,135. Dore Gold is president of CJCS, Austrian-born Israeli Manfred Gerstenfeld, former chairperson of JCPA's steering committee, is chairperson, and Chaya Herskovic is director general of both JCPA and CJCS.¹¹⁸

NGO Monitor also has an American tax-exempt charity to raise funds, previously known as the American Friends of NGO Monitor but which changed its name in 2010 to Research + Evaluation = Promoting Organisational Responsibility and Transparency, or REPORT Inc. (EIN No. 26-2971061).¹¹⁹ Although REPORT Inc. was granted tax-exempt status in 2009, as late as January 2012, it reportedly still had not filed any information to the IRS.¹²⁰ However, since then, it has reported donations totalling \$3,891,443 as of 2013.

Jerusalem-based photographer Dov Yarden is director general of REPORT Inc., as well as chief executive officer of NGO Monitor, and Nina Rosenwald is vice president of the US branch. Max Blumenthal has dubbed Rosenwald, who is a former member of the National Board of AIPAC, 'the sugar mama of anti-Muslim hate' due to the claim she 'uses her millions to cement the alliance between the pro-Israel lobby and the Islamophobic fringe'.¹²¹ She runs the Abstraction Fund, which donated to American Friends of NGO Monitor in 2011.

Boston real estate developer Josh Katzen is president of REPORT Inc. He and his wife Amelia Katzen are both members of the board of CAMERA, and serve respectively as president and treasurer of JNS. Josh Katzen is also vice chairperson of the national board of MEF, Daniel Pipes's conservative, Israel-focused think tank. In turn, Pipes is a director of JNS.

UN Watch and NGO Monitor jointly published a report after Israel's 2014 military campaign in the Gaza Strip, criticising the UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on Gaza

and international NGOs' coverage of the conflict. The report also focuses on the number and type of rockets fired from Gaza, international support for Palestinians in Gaza and the abuse of humanitarian aid to Gaza. The report makes two references to the Israeli 'siege' of Gaza, which is placed in quotations marks (as is 'occupation'), and 453 mentions of 'terror'.¹²²

In its 2014 annual report, NGO Monitor states that, 'In parallel to the rockets and tunnels attacks, particularly in the south, the [international rights] NGO network fought the political and informational dimensions of the war against Israel. As a counter, NGO Monitor published over 20 reports on NGO warfare, including analyses of B'Tselem, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and "NGO medical malpractice".'¹²³

UN Watch and NGO Monitor funders

UN Watch is headquartered in Geneva and NGO Monitor in Israel. Neither publishes a list of donors. However, by searching through IRS tax documents on the Foundation Center's website,¹²⁴ we were able to uncover 18 registered charities that have supported UN Watch and/or NGO Monitor. Nevertheless, this information is certainly incomplete.

The AJC changed the way it itemised support for UN Watch in 2007, subsequently incorporating this information as affiliated expenditure only intermittently. Additionally, in 2012, an organisation that calls itself United Nations Watch – USA (EIN no. 45-1683502) also began filing tax reports. It reported income of \$381,113 in 2012 and \$481,299 in 2013.

The funders of NGO Monitor were even more difficult to uncover. Although an organisation known as American Friends of NGO Monitor has been receiving donations for many years, it is not registered as a charity, thus has never reported any income to the IRS. REPORT Inc. began filing tax records in 2010, with a handwritten notice of it being a 'name change from American Friends of NGO Monitor'.¹²⁵ And yet, several foundations have continued to make donations to the unregistered American friends of group.

Furthermore, the organisation in Israel is remarkably opaque. A Hebrew language expos é in *Haaretz* newspaper revealed that in 2010, three of NGO Monitor's donations came from undisclosed sources: 'The first one, for the sum of NIS 570,000 (\$154,000), was passed through the Jewish Federation of North America and the Jewish Agency; the second one, for NIS 100,000, was transferred through the Israeli non-profit Matan – started in 1998 by local tycoon Shari Arison, owner of Israel's largest Bank – and the third donation came through a British fund registered in the Isle of Man, known for its favourable tax rates.'¹²⁶

But despite the difficulties we encountered in researching their funders, by searching through the database of tax filings, we were still able to uncover 18 registered charities in the US that have financially supported UN Watch and NGO Monitor. *Table 1* lists these 18 charities, in alphabetical order. We have combined the amounts donated to both organisations between 2009-2013 in column three.

Table 1: Known funders of UN Watch and NGO Monitor (2009-2013)¹²⁷

Foundation	Tax No.	Donations to UN Watch and NGO Monitor (2009-2013)	Support for similar right-wing organisations
Abstraction Fund	20-5327719	\$10,000	Aish HaTorah/ Clarion Fund CAMERA David Horowitz Freedom Center Foundation for Defence of Democracies Friends of Israel Initiative Middle East Forum MEMRI
American Jewish Committee	13-5563393	\$1,216,843	American Friends of IDC
Ben and Esther Rosenbloom Foundation	52-1258672	\$56,000	American Jewish Committee Central Fund for Israel Friends of the IDF Middle East Forum WINEP
CJM Foundation	13-7105559	\$50,000	
Jewish Community Federation	94-1156533	\$330,000	American Friends of IDC American Friends of the Reut Institute Birthright Israel Jewish National Fund
Foundation	Tax No.	Donations to UN Watch and NGO Monitor (2009-2013)	Support for similar right-wing organisations
Koret Foundation	94-1624987	\$75,000	American Friends of IDC American Jewish Committee Birthright Israel Foundation for Defence of Democracies Friends of the IDF Middle East Forum MEMRI
Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund	94-3167546	\$50,000	Birthright Israel
Middle East Forum	23-7749796	\$130,000	American Friends of IDC American Jewish Committee CAMERA David Horowitz Freedom Center Friends of Israel Initiative MEMRI
MZ Foundation	94-3316088	\$220,000	American Friends of Reut Institute American Jewish Committee Birthright Israel CAMERA Central Fund of Israel David Horowitz Foundation Middle East Forum WINEP

