

# *NGO Monitor*

[www.ngo-monitor.org](http://www.ngo-monitor.org)

## **Christian Aid: Organization and Activities (Update)**

**December 8, 2005**

### *Organizational Data*

- Founded in the 1950s and based in London.
- Goals: "To further charitable purposes, which relieve or combat malnutrition, hunger, disease, sickness or distress throughout the world. To further charitable purposes which advance or assist such other charitable work as may be carried on by or with the support or approval of the British Council of Churches."
- Income in 2004/2005 exceeded £79.9 million (approximately \$140 million) and of this, £64.2 million (\$112 million) came from private donations, gifts and legacies. Most of the remainder came from government sources, including nearly £7 million (\$12.2 million) from the UK government Department for International Development (DfID). Church of England, UK Baptists, Methodist Churches, and the Russian Orthodox Churches are major partners and sponsors of Christian Aid.
- Christian Aid is governed by a board of trustees and its Director, Daleep Mukarji. Many of its executive members demonstrate clear pro-Palestinian sympathies and some are active in organisations that campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel. The following is a selection of examples. For a more thorough treatment see NGO-monitor's "Who's who in Christian Aid?"<sup>1</sup>
  - REV JOHN GLADWIN, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, speaks frequently on Israeli-Palestinian political issues. In a July 2002 speech to the Church of England General Synod, Gladwin claimed that terrorism and violence are the result of "Israel's illegal occupation of the 1967 territories", thereby ignoring the decades of war, terror and rejectionism prior to 1967. He also set out a number of conditions for peace, including the Palestinian 'right of return' but failed to call for an end to Palestinian terror.
  - Gladwin is a patron of the Friends of Sabeel UK. The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center is one of the major sources of the divestment campaign, and its leader, Naim Ateek, refers to Israel as an "apartheid state".<sup>2</sup> (Sabeel is also one of Christian Aid's "partners", as detailed below.)
  - VAL FERGUSON, VICE-CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (until December 2004) is a trustee of UK-based non-profit organization Responding to Conflict (RTC). According to RTC's 2003/4 Annual Report, the organization is embarking on a 3 year partnership with the highly politicized Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) to "help

them build their capacity to impact effectively on political decision-shapers and on public discourse".<sup>3</sup>

- DALEEP MUKARJI, DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN AID since 1998. Following a June 2003 visit to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Mukarji referring to Israel's security barrier stated: "It appeared that huge, open-air prisons were being built, to destabilise and demoralise Palestinian communities."<sup>4</sup>

### *Findings:*

- Christian Aid's extensive involvement in anti-Israel political campaigns (including divestment and boycotts, and condemnation of disengagement) exacerbates the conflict, and undermines the achievement of charitable and humanitarian objectives;
- These campaigns systematically ignore the complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the history, including the rejectionism and violence prior to the 1967 war, and distort the causes of poverty in the Middle East.
- Christian Aid exhibits a clear political bias in its disproportionate emphasis on Israel and the Palestinians. Such lack of proportionality suggests double standards, and is inconsistent with the concept of universal human rights.
- Christian Aid's rhetoric displays a deep hostility towards Israel, blaming it for Palestinian suffering, while failing to mention terrorism and the legitimacy of security measures to ensure the human rights of Israelis.
- Christian Aid not only contributes funds, but also publicity, legitimacy and logistical support to several partner organizations with a strong ideological agenda. Christian Aid's name is used to raise funds for groups such as Sabeel, LAW, PCHR and ICAHD that promote extremist anti-Israel political agendas.
- Christian Aid's objective of relieving suffering is not advanced by following the Palestinian practice of diverting attention outward against Israel, rather than dealing with the internal causes, including extensive corruption and leadership failure.
- Christian Aid's political emphasis comes at the expense of assisting the Palestinians in developing the institutions of government, including accountability and security, that are necessary for relieving suffering and promoting peace.
- The November 2005 meeting between Christian Aid representatives and the Chief Rabbi's office, and the appointment of a liaison officer to advise on future Christian Aid publications, are important first steps for change, reflecting the impact of NGO Monitor's reports ("Sacks to vet Christian Aid texts", *Jewish Chronicle*, December 2, 2005). The charity has declared its intention to "tak[e] seriously its responsibility to not cause offence to the Jewish community."

### *Examples:*

#### *Christian Aid's Highly Disproportionate Focus on Israel*

- Christian Aid's disproportionate emphasis on condemning Israel suggests double standards, and is inconsistent with the concept of universal human rights. For example, the Middle East crisis is listed as one of five "recent emergencies" on the Christian Aid website<sup>6</sup> (as of October 16 2005), and within this framework, the dominant emphasis is on Israel, Gaza and the West Bank<sup>7</sup>.
- Of the 12 "news items" listed on this page on October 16 2005, 8 dealt with Israel and Palestinian issues -- far more than the case of Egypt or Iraq. There was no mention of Lebanon or Syria, despite the assassinations of political leaders and journalists, and the impact of these events on the citizens of Lebanon. Of the 8 items on Israeli/Palestinian issues none included any mention of terrorism or Palestinian corruption and 7 were critical of Israel, including the highly politicized and biased headline, "Sharon confirms fears of further Israeli expansion in the West Bank."<sup>8</sup>
- In addition, this section includes a prominent link to a display of very one-sided paintings, entitled "the inconvenience of history" and produced by John Keane<sup>9</sup> after he "accompanied Christian Aid staff on two visits to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2002". All the archive links at the side of the "Middle East" page are also to Christian Aid publications on Israel and the territories, or to websites of partner organizations, many of which have previously been analyzed by NGO-Monitor and found to be inaccurate and politically biased.
- The disproportionate focus on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict continues on the webpage supposedly describing "Christian Aid in Lebanon"<sup>10</sup>. The only photo on the page is of a child, with the description, "...There are over 370,000 Palestinian refugees living in camps in Lebanon" and the "conflict" section describes how "Lebanon's southern border with Israel continues to be the scene of sporadic mortar attacks between Israeli forces and Lebanon's Shia militant political group, Hezbollah". Not only does this ignore any internal conflicts surrounding Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, but it also misrepresents the situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border as one of mutual provocation.
- The Middle East "video clips"<sup>11</sup> further reflect this lack of proportionality and resulting bias. The archive includes 9 videos on Israel and 3 on Iraq.

### *Using humanitarian aims to promote political bias*

- In October 2003, Christian Aid produced a fundraising film entitled "Peace Under Siege" claiming to depict the "roots of Palestinian poverty." In practice, the 20-minute documentary consisted of a vehement and highly inaccurate attack on Israel.<sup>12</sup>
- Christian Aid's publication, "Facts on the ground: The end of the two-state solution?"<sup>13</sup>, (October 21, 2004) presents a strictly political position which places full blame on Israel, strips away the context of warfare and incitement, and repeats biased Palestinian allegations.<sup>14</sup> While emphasizing "the strangulation of the Palestinian economy, as more land is taken from the West Bank for settler roads and settlements", the impact of terrorism and corruption among Palestinian leaders receives scant notice.
- Christian Aid consistently draws an amoral equivalence between Palestinian terrorism and Israel countermeasures, terming them a "constant cycle of violence." A press release of 30

January 2005 stated: "Ten Israelis were killed and more than 50 injured yesterday when a suicide bomber struck close to Ariel Sharon's residence in Jerusalem. Hours before, eight Palestinians were killed during an Israeli incursion into a suburb of Gaza City." While the Israeli civilians were killed in a deliberate act of terrorism, Christian Aid fails to provide any context to the Israeli military operation that led to the deaths of the Palestinians.

- Drawing upon powerful Christian imagery and symbolism, Christian Aid headlined its Christmas 2004 appeal "Child of Bethlehem"<sup>15</sup>, concentrating on the story of a seven-year old Palestinian girl living in Bethlehem who was "hit in the eye by shrapnel from a bullet fired by Israeli soldiers." Using the links between the town of Bethlehem and Christianity during the Christmas period, Christian Aid has connected the suffering of Palestinian Christian children with that of Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, and to centuries of anti-Semitism and blood libels against the Jewish people.
- Christian Aid distributed an 18-page "Child of Bethlehem" brochure<sup>16</sup> to churches for use as a religious resource to promote this Christmas appeal. The brochure is described as containing "Worship resources which make connections between the Bethlehem of Christ's birth and the contemporary situation in the Middle East".

#### *Condemnation of Legitimate Israeli Policies (including disengagement)*

- Christian Aid's emphasis on political activity, rather than humanitarian assistance, is also illustrated in its active opposition to the Israeli government's policies ("Disengagement plan' is another blow to Middle East peace"<sup>17</sup>). A press release of 16 April 2004 expressed opposition to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Gaza disengagement initiative, describing US President Bush's endorsement of the plan as "another blow...dealt to the people of the Middle East". (Israel's Disengagement Plan - NGOs Rush to Reject Gaza Withdrawal - NGO Monitor May 2004<sup>18</sup>)
- Having expressed its opposition to the Gaza withdrawal plan, Christian Aid then issued an 18 May press release in the wake of Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, stating (again without context): "Israel said it would intensify its military operations in Gaza hours after a peace rally on 15 May in Tel Aviv demanding that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon fulfil his plans to withdraw fully from the occupied territory."
- On 28 May 2004, Christian Aid released a parliamentary briefing paper "A Road to Nowhere?"<sup>19</sup>, calling on Israel to abandon its unilateral disengagement policy, stating that the plan "undermines international law" and that the UK and US were also "in danger of breaching international law" by endorsing the plan. Once again, Christian Aid demonstrated its core political agenda, pursued under the facade of humanitarian assistance.
- April 2005 saw the publication of a 'news' article, "Israeli strikes cost British tax payers millions"<sup>20</sup>, where Christian Aid claims that Israeli actions in Gaza and the West Bank have destroyed £16m worth of EU-sponsored infrastructure. The charity completely ignores the context of conflict and the Palestinian terror campaign in its analysis, and claims – in the face of all the evidence to the contrary -- that "the military strikes... have done nothing to provide security for Israelis".

- In August 2005, the “news” article entitled “Sharon confirms fears of further Israeli expansion in the West Bank”<sup>21</sup> is a further example of an ostensibly humanitarian organization involved in biased political campaigning
- Christian Aid has also campaigned actively against the security barrier. In a feature on its website (“Why the Israeli 'barrier' is wrong”), Christian Aid briefly acknowledged that “It is important to recognize Israel's legitimate fears about terrorism, and its need to take steps to protect its citizens.” However, this piece continues “our experience on the ground tells us that the barrier is not the way to achieve security and peace for either people.” The barrier also is described as “the latest in a series of policies introduced by the Israeli government since it began its occupation of Palestinian land in 1967” .... “these measures have impoverished the Palestinian population”. Such political campaigning in which the history of Arab rejectionism and incitement is entirely erased reflects blatant bias that is inconsistent with claims to be a charitable organization.
- A March 2005 website posting entitled “A House Divided”<sup>22</sup> consists of a video and report on the effect of the security barrier on a Palestinian woman and her family. Although the article briefly states that “Israel has an absolute right to defend its citizens from attack”, this did not balance the clearly biased report, and the parting words of the woman in the video that there is “nothing about security here”. The main thrust of the piece that the barrier is responsible for “two of the underlying causes of Palestinian poverty”, (reduced access to land and restrictions on their freedom of movement) negates any responsibility on the part of the Palestinian leadership.

#### *Bias added by Christian Aid's Partner Organizations*

- Christian Aid contributes funds, publicity, legitimacy and logistical support to a number of partner organisations.
- It is directly linked to Sabeel, a Palestinian NGO leading the anti-Israel divestment campaign and similar activities. Indeed, two prominent members of Christian Aid's leadership provide legitimacy and support for Sabeel's activities in the UK.<sup>23</sup> Other examples of Christian Aid's partner organizations include the Palestinian NGOs LAW<sup>24</sup>, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)<sup>25</sup> and the East Jerusalem YMCA. LAW and PCHR played prominent roles in the demonization of Israel that took place at the September 2001 Durban Conference. In December 2003, the Ford Foundation pledged to immediately halt funding for LAW. In addition, LAW<sup>26</sup> has been under investigation for financial irregularities leading to a freeze in foreign donations after \$3.63 million was found to have been misused. According to reports, the EU investigated suspicions that LAW, amongst others, passed money received from the EU, to terrorist organizations such as Fatah and Hamas. (LAW is listed as a Christian Aid partner organization in an April 2002 letter to EU foreign ministers<sup>27</sup>)
- As shown in NGO Monitor analyses, a considerable number of Christian Aid's partner organizations demonstrate a clear anti-Israel political agenda, rather than internally focused efforts to develop responsible government and the institutions for sustained development.<sup>28</sup> . These political partners include: the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees<sup>29</sup>, Ittijah<sup>30</sup>, Palestinian Center for Human Rights<sup>31</sup> the Israel Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHHD)<sup>32</sup>, and Physicians for Human Rights - Israel.<sup>33</sup>

- Christian Aid's website provides a major platform for these "partners". For example, the August 2005 report "On the streets of Gaza"<sup>34</sup>, is written by Raji Sourani, Director of PCHR. This article makes little pretence at humanitarian concerns, and pushes PCHR's extremist political agenda, arguing that "'disengagement' means that the suffering of the occupation will continue". Furthermore, the July story on Christian Aid's youth website pressureworks.org, "Knocked down and Locked out"<sup>35</sup> was written by the Action Advocacy Office for ICAHD, another partner organization that justifies terrorism and promotes "apartheid" rhetoric. In this piece pressureworks.org effectively became a political mouthpiece for ICAHD campaigning

### *.Bringing teens into the cycle of incitement*

- The launch of its "Pressureworks"<sup>36</sup> website indicates Christian Aid's attempt to engage with the younger generation. The website makes no secret of its support for what are regarded as radical causes allied to the anti-globalization movement, including anti-Israeli positions.
- Pressureworks urges its readers to "Take action now!"<sup>38</sup> by contacting their MPs and Foreign Office ministers. For this purpose the standard letter condemns Israeli security policies, settlements, the security barrier and "the presence of overwhelming Israeli military force in Palestinian civilian areas, [which] threatens people in the region and beyond." Calling for the dismantling of all settlements, the letter urges the European Union to "take appropriate measures if Israel fails to comply". Nowhere is there a call for Palestinians to put an end to terrorism.
- Pressureworks asks "What's wrong?"<sup>39</sup> in the Middle East, stating that "Osama Bin Laden refers to US support of the Israelis as one of the main reasons for his 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre", thus attributing the rise of international terrorism to the US and Israel.
- Pressureworks reflects Christian Aid's disproportionate emphasis on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, at the expense of other much more urgent humanitarian causes. The website has three "focus" articles<sup>40</sup> on major world issues: HIV/Aids, World Debt and Israel, with the latter taking the headline spot.
- The project "Soft Focus, Hard Cell" aims to "document daily experiences in the OPT" through mobile phone photography<sup>41</sup>. However, it has in fact provided another forum for political propaganda by anti-Israel campaigners such as ICAHD<sup>42</sup> and the Palestinian Medical Relief Society.<sup>43</sup> The descriptions of the photos completely erase the context of conflict, thus eradicating any credibility of this already subjective exercise. Photos depict "Abu Sneineh's destroyed house", "Israeli soldiers and members of the Christian Peacemaker Team escort[ing] children from school in Al-Twani, to protect them from settlers" and "Hassan... his landlord has raised his rent, presumably in order to get him out; probably to make way for the settlers".

### *"Fact-Finding Missions"*

- Christian Aid takes British politicians on "fact-finding missions" to the Palestinian territories presenting a one-sided view of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip without any adequate chance for an official Israeli response. The results were highlighted by the

virulently anti-Israel comments in the media of MPs Oona King and Jenny Tonge upon their return from a Christian Aid mission. Tonge said of suicide bombers: "If I had to live in that situation - and I say that advisedly - I might just consider becoming one myself."

- A Christian Aid visit of three Irish politicians, described in a press release of 30 January 2004 ("International action needed to break Middle East cycle of violence"), which included accompanying volunteers for Physicians for Human Rights-Israel to Tulkarm as well as the Israeli security fence around Qalqilya, failed to include any reports on meetings with official or unofficial representatives of Israel.
- Similarly, a press release of 28 May 2004, quoting British MPs on a visit to the region, stated that it was part of a programme "to enable politicians to see for themselves the everyday experiences of both Palestinians and Israelis." There was no reference to any activities regarding Israeli viewpoints.
- Christian Aid sponsored two visits to the region by artist John Keane which culminated in the opening in London of an exhibition of strongly anti-Israeli paintings<sup>44</sup>.

#### *One-sided Agenda at Conference on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories*

- In July 2005, the charity held a "retreat conference on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories"<sup>45</sup>. Supposedly a time for prayer and education about the conflict, the list of invited speakers demonstrate the harsh agenda:
  - Graham Sparkes, head of "Faith and Unity" at the Baptist Union<sup>46</sup>, is involved in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)<sup>47</sup> that supports "nonviolent resistance" to "end the occupation", including "monitoring and reporting violations of human rights and international humanitarian law".
  - Sarah Malian, communications officer for the Middle East at Christian Aid (this office has been leading the public relations aspect of the attacks on Israeli legitimacy)
  - Pat Rantisi who lives in Ramallah, is connected to Sabeel.<sup>4849</sup>
  - Richard Burden MP, chair of the All Party Britain-Palestine Group in Parliament.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/editions/v3n06/ChristianAidWhoisWho.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#sabeel>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.respond.org/resources/annual\\_review2003\\_2004.pdf](http://www.respond.org/resources/annual_review2003_2004.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news\\_syndication/article\\_2003\\_06\\_19\\_fence.shtml](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_2003_06_19_fence.shtml)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/news/SacksToVet.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/world/emerresp/emerresp.htm>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/middle\\_east/index.htm](http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/middle_east/index.htm)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/stories/050825s.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/news/gallery/johnkeane/4arafat.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/world/where/meeca/lebanonp.htm>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/video/middle\\_east/index.htm](http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/video/middle_east/index.htm)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/editions/v2n03/v2n03-2.htm>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/indepth/410israelopt/index.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/editions/v3n02/ResponsetoChristianAidReport.htm>

- 
- 15 [http://www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas/worship\\_resources/chmag.htm](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas/worship_resources/chmag.htm)
  - 16 [http://www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas/worship\\_resources/xmas04\\_wlg.pdf](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas/worship_resources/xmas04_wlg.pdf)
  - 17 <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/stories/040416s1.htm>
  - 18 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/editions/v2n09/v2n09-1.htm>
  - 19 <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/indepth/504israelopt/index.htm>
  - 20 <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/stories/050425s.htm>
  - 21 <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/news/stories/050825s.htm>
  - 22 <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/video/503iopt/index.htm#>
  - 23 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#sabeel>
  - 24 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#law>
  - 25 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#center>
  - 26 <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/27/1048653805972.html?oneclick=true>
  - 27 <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/news/stories/020403.htm>
  - 28 <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/world/partlinks.htm#meeca>
  - 29 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#upmrc>
  - 30 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#ittijah>
  - 31 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#pchr>
  - 32 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#icahd>
  - 33 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#physicians>
  - 34 <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/news/features/050816gaza.htm>
  - 35 [http://www.pressureworks.org/focus/iopt/story/eyes\\_demolition.html](http://www.pressureworks.org/focus/iopt/story/eyes_demolition.html)
  - 36 <http://www.pressureworks.org>
  - 38 [http://www.pressureworks.org/dosomething/act/211004\\_ME\\_Action.html](http://www.pressureworks.org/dosomething/act/211004_ME_Action.html)
  - 39 <http://www.pressureworks.org/focus/iopt/what/index.html>
  - 40 <http://www.pressureworks.org/focus/index.html>
  - 41 [http://www.pressureworks.org/focus/iopt/story/eyes\\_phones.html](http://www.pressureworks.org/focus/iopt/story/eyes_phones.html)
  - 42 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#icahd>
  - 43 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#upmrc>
  - 44 <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/news/features/0401jkeane.htm>
  - 45 [http://www.pressureworks.org/dosomething/events/2005/July\\_IOPTRetreat.html](http://www.pressureworks.org/dosomething/events/2005/July_IOPTRetreat.html) and  
<http://christianaidwatch.blogspot.com/2005/07/on-retreat.html>
  - 46 [http://www.baptist.org.uk/Structure/faith\\_and\\_unity.htm](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Structure/faith_and_unity.htm)
  - 47 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#eappi>
  - 48 <http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/cstone24/page5.html>
  - 49 <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/archives/infofile.htm#sabeel>