

Summer Report

Thanks to the generous support of the JKR Foundation, I spent the summer interning at NGO Monitor in Jerusalem. I was extremely grateful for the opportunity, due to the fact that it allowed me to further two goals: to use my skills to help combat the global BDS effort and to enhance my academic interest in understanding of the role of funders in foreign policy. As a graduate student at Columbia University I am, unfortunately, all too familiar with the BDS movement and how it permeates throughout various aspects of on campus and off campus life. At Columbia, the movement is led by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace. Together, these organizations host numerous events, bring speakers, demonstrate on campus (during Israel Apartheid Week for example), and write petitions in an effort to encourage students of the university to support the university's divestment from Israel/companies doing business with Israel. This phenomenon, however, is not unique to Columbia and is in fact present at campuses around the world, in Churches, and in businesses. NGO Monitor's niche in combatting this effort is the organization's role in understanding who the organizations leading the BDS movement are and where they get their funding from.

NGO Monitor publishes extensive research – mapping the funding of various NGOs operating in Israel. The research also demonstrates when and where NGOs partake in mission creep – in extreme cases documenting when an NGO supports terrorism. Since the Durban Conference of 2001, NGO Monitor has documented non-profits that demonize, delegitimize, and apply double standards to Israel. NGO Monitor's research is used by Members of Knesset, Members of Congress, and Members of Parliament around the world as a tool for governments to better understand how their dollars are being implemented on the ground and whether or not they are meeting the grant's intended goals.

My primary role this summer was writing country-specific reports about how NGOs are using the guise of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to pressure firms to divest from Israel. The CSR movement is an effort to ensure companies invest responsibly. This can mean that companies will not invest in tobacco companies or companies that finance cluster munitions. The CSR framework has been used by the BDS movement to oppose investments in companies doing business beyond the 1949 Armistice Line. NGOs active in the CSR campaign against Israel, such as the [War on Want](#) and the [BDS Movement](#), argue that any investment in businesses operating over the 1949 Armistice Line is in violation of international law – despite this not being entirely clear – it is an assertion denied in courts in several countries such as [Canada](#), [France](#), and the [United Kingdom](#). My role this summer was to document which investment companies are being targeted by CSR effort and by whom. These reports will be presented Members of Parliament around the world to educate them on this coordinated campaign to pressure corporations to divest from Israel.

While working on this project my daily schedule included using the Internet to research companies – such as grocery stores, co-ops, banks, insurance funds, etc. – that were being targeted by the coordinated efforts of NGOs to divest from Israeli companies. Having noted which companies were being targeted and how, I then researched “who” was behind the campaigns – namely which NGOs were active in which country. I wrote reports on CSR campaigns in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. I also drafted a general introduction and conclusion to explain and sum up the goals of this effort. NGO Monitor hopes to publish a report on the topic in addition to providing the country specific reports to their respective parliaments.

In addition to my primary research on CSR, I was also responsible for editing anything published by NGO Monitor. This included any blog posts, reports, press releases, and op-eds. I especially enjoyed this aspect of my internship as it allowed me to become familiar with all aspects of the organization and allowed me to connect with all other members of the staff. I was also given the opportunity to work on some smaller research projects which were published in blog posts and reports on NGO Monitor's website. Such posts include blogs/reports on the [World Social Forum](#), [Human Right Watch's Child Detention Report](#), and the Belgian NGO [Intal](#) (where I translated their website and research from French).

Towards the very end of my internship, the Shin Bet released [its finding](#) that a World Vision Aid worker in Gaza had been indicted for funneling approximately 60% of the organization's Gaza budget to Hamas for six years, totaling approximately \$43 million. Simply put, the individual was employed by World Visa Gaza while at the same time working for Hamas, enabling him to take funds intended for the NGO and to use them for the terrorist organization. One example is the construction of a military facility with money and resources intended for Gazan civilians. NGO Monitor became extremely busy as we wrote numerous op-eds, updated our files on World Vision, and mapped the NGO's complex funding structure. I published an [op-ed](#) in the *Algemeiner* about the importance of individual donor's due diligence on the topic.

I am honored to have received the JKR Foundation grant, which was necessary for me to be able to travel to Jerusalem, and spend the summer working with NGO Monitor. I look forward to continued mentorship and contact with the JKR Foundation, and in aiding future grantees in their endeavors.