

The recently published report [“Puppet Regime: Hamas’ Coercive Grip on Aid and NGO Operations in Gaza”](#) by [NGO Monitor](#) shows how the terrorist organization systematically controlled international aid organizations in Gaza. The documents prove that NGOs in Gaza are not independent, but part of an “institutionalized framework of coercion, intimidation and surveillance that serves Hamas’ terrorist goals”.

The central means of this influence was the “Guarantor System”, through which Hamas appointed approved local confidants to leading positions in international NGOs – including directors and deputies. According to a document from December 2022, at least ten of these confidants were Hamas members, supporters or employed by Hamas-affiliated authorities. However, these intermediaries did not have to be members of Hamas: a March 2020 document identified 55 such confidants in 48 NGOs who “can be exploited for security purposes to infiltrate foreign organizations, their senior personnel and their movements”.

#### Moral declaration of bankruptcy

NGO Monitor rightly speaks of a moral declaration of bankruptcy on the part of those NGOs that submitted to pressure from Hamas. “By remaining silent and cooperating with the regime, NGOs are not only covering up Hamas’ abuses, but are beginning to internalize its agenda and propaganda,” the report states. The result is an aid sector “that in many places no longer acts independently or impartially, but is embedded in a terror-driven system and becomes part of disinformation campaigns”.

In addition, NGO Monitor emphasizes that many organizations willingly condemned Israel publicly while ignoring Hamas’ systematic exploitation of humanitarian structures – an imbalance that creates a “one-sided narrative” and distorts the situation.

#### Gaza reconstruction: ‘aid-to-terror highway’ must be prevented

In light of Gaza’s impending reconstruction, NGO Monitor warns of the consequences: “Now that plans for Gaza’s reconstruction are moving forward, and to prevent a repeat of the ‘aid-to-terror highway’, the publication of these documents is a reminder that every aid actor – without exception – as well as the international community, must finally take the long overdue measures that will stop Hamas abuse and create robust checks and balances.”