Jerusalem, Sunday the 12th of January, 2014

Subject: answer to the inquiry by the UK parliament on DFID’s activities in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Pu-Ami is not concretely a partner of DFID in the occupied Palestinian territory but is in other parts of the world and is in touch with its representatives in Jerusalem. Having some knowledge of its strategy in the area and strong of more than 10 years of local intervention, it has been considered to transmit our opinion, that could eventually be interesting for such inquiry.

While years following the second intifada saw humanitarian support using classical emergency and post-emergency tools (NFI, economic recovery, WASH), interventions began answering more and more what seems to be the crucial issue in the occupied Palestinian territory: protection. In such a politically protracted crisis marked by numerous IHL and HR violations, PU-AMI’s opinion believes that donors and NGOs strategies should be addressing this specific need in areas where people are vulnerable to such concern for not being protected enough by the authorities.

As long as it concerns humanitarian aid, discussions with DFID and study of its strategy show that it is going into this way, supporting agencies acting in these specific zones such as Area C, seam zone and buffer zones around settlements in the West Bank, and access restricted areas in Gaza. Knowing that in these areas Palestinians do not benefit nor from an effective protection by the Israeli authorities against abuses by the settlers and army forces, nor from the Palestinian authorities that so far have no possibility to intervene there, the presence of international actors guaranteeing a minimum of care seems crucial. The fact of being present in these areas also calls for advocacy, which is considered essential to participate in bending the political decisions holding all the responsibility there.

Donors and agencies should be very careful about not involuntarily maintaining the situation by largely supporting Palestinians where the Palestinian authority is competent and doted to do so. The international community is to a certain extent participating in easing the occupation and blockade by providing people what should be granted by the authorities, as mentioned under international humanitarian law. If this situation exists in many areas in the world, the fact that the problems in the occupied Palestinian territory are essentially political and are not the result of a lack of resources or infrastructures, it should be particularly looked after. Therefore development programs should strongly involve local institutions and organizations, as already done by most donors.

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