

# Justifying a “Humanitarian War” against Syria? The Sinister Role of the NGOs

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The National Endowment for Democracy, or NED, is an organization that presents itself as an NGO officially dedicated to “the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world”. But in reality it gets 95% of its budget from the United States Congress. It was officially created by the Reagan administration in 1982.



The nature of the NED has led many contemporary intellectuals and researchers to describe it as an agency enabling the secret services of the US to overthrow governments that the US State Department dislikes.

This description was supported by the testimony of Oliviet Guilmain, a researcher at the CECE (Centre for the Comparative Study of Elections), [during an information session at the French Senate concerning financing of the electoral process](#). It is known that the NED finances opposition parties in numerous countries and provides special aid to exiles and opponents of regimes targeted by the US State Department.

In the case of Syria, NED’s main organization is the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies. It is also a partner of the International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) which received \$140,000 following a meeting in December 2009 between Carl Gershman and self-styled French human rights organizations. NED’s French contact was François Zimeray, who was former Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner’s Ambassador for Human Rights. Those present during that meeting included the Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development (CCFD), the African section of AEDH (Act Together for Human Rights), Reporters Without Borders, SOS Racisme and the FIDH.

The International Federation of Human Rights is thus an official partner of the NED, as is also shown by its support for [the allegations made by the ex-secretary general of the Libyan Human Rights League](#) – also attached to the FIDH – against the government of Moammer Kadhafi. Those allegations, also supported by the NGO “U.N Watch”, were what set off the diplomatic procedures against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.



In the case of Syria, Dr. Radwan Ziadeh is the director of the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies. His highly impressive [biography](#) makes clear his engagement is in favor of US foreign policy in the Middle East. In particular, he is a member of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) and director of the Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Washington. He was present alongside Aly Abuzakuuk – one of the NED representatives in Libya – for [the Round Table of the Democracy Awards](#), which is an event that honors so-called “human rights activists” by the NED.

Moreover, there are strong similarities between the process that created the Humanitarian War in Libya and what is being elaborated in regard to Syria. For example, UN Watch, an organization that coordinates the operations of the NED and the FIDH in Geneva, has already launched [several petitions](#) against the Syrian regime and Bashar Al-Assad. These petitions against Syria make the same allegations of massacres as those put forth by the ex-secretary of the Libyan Human Rights League, Sliman Bouchuiguir, at the UN Human Rights Council against Libya.

It is therefore an urgent matter to denounce these procedures. It is all the more important since recent history shows us that these allegations were not verified in the case of Libya. Nor was there any proof based on any solid evidence about the allegations made against Tripoli, contrary to the claims of the International Criminal Court.

*Julien Teil is a videographer and investigative documentary film maker from France.*

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