



Ramallah, 4 November 2021

Mr. António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General
United Nations, S-233
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary-General,

We are writing to you as the six Palestinian organisations dedicated to the protection of human rights, recently disturbed and appalled by the newest attempt of the Israeli government to criminalize our work and thus the protection of the foundational tenets of the United Nations.

On 19 November 2021, the Israeli Ministry of Defence has unlawfully and baselessly designated our organizations as “terror organizations” under domestic Israeli anti-terrorism law (2016). This recent decision is consistent with previous smear campaign and numerous attacks on the Palestinian civil society, including our organisations and is an affront to the international community and the universal values which the UN espouses.

Israel’s designation constitutes the latest in an escalating series of smear attacks and institutionalized violence against defenders of the Palestinian people’s human rights and fundamental freedoms that form part of Israel’s strategy to maintain its apartheid regime of institutionalized racial discrimination and domination over the Palestinian people as a whole, by silencing human rights defenders. The arbitrary designation targeting six of the most eminent Palestinian CSOs places serious obstacles on their documentation and monitoring of human rights violations, accountability work to prosecute Israel’s war crimes and crimes against humanity, and legal and advocacy efforts. These obstacles include, but are not limited to, the negative impact on funding from international partners due to Israel’s delegitimization campaign, raids of the Israeli military on Palestinian CSOs and the concurrent destruction of offices and essential data or the arrest of the organization’s staff members and prominent human rights defenders and advocates.

By criminalising the work of our organisations, our staff faces immediate danger of arrest and further arbitrary punishments. This outlawing of human rights work also adds to the range of measures intended to weaken Palestinian civil society and its efforts for a more just and dignified life. Importantly, this needs to be primarily understood as the aggressive behaviour of a regime on the path of eradicating any sort of human rights based advocacy, as such work is naturally perceived as a threat to its impunity.

There has already been a massive outpouring of support, condemnations of the designation and reiterations of the Israeli claims being unsubstantiated, by international civil society as well as government and organizational representatives. Next to various international outlets publishing stories on this blatant infringement on human rights work, the European Commission, the Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt, the Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney, the Dutch Foreign Minister Sigrid Kaag as well as the Belgian Development Minister Meryame Kitir have *inter alia* underlined the unsubstantial and baseless character of the Israeli claims.

Palestinian civil society must not be left alone in its struggle for basic justice and dignity. We must not allow Palestinians to be silenced and human rights defenders to be criminalized and targeted, in Palestine or anywhere else in the world. An attack on Palestinian civil society and Palestinian CSOs is an attack on the global struggle for human rights.

In order to foster justice and dignity for Palestinians suffering daily violations to their basic right and in order to retain and underline the global regard for human rights work, undersigned organisations call upon you, Mr. Secretary-General, to use your unique position to unequivocally condemn the Israeli designations and its other attempts to smear human rights work and to underline the importance of work by Palestinian civil society and the UN support of human rights advocacy, whether in Palestine or around the world.

In light of the above, the six Palestinian organisations recommend that the international community, the UN member states and that you, Secretary-General:

1. Call on Israel, to urgently rescind the designations as acts which violate the freedoms of opinion and expression, and freedom of association, and amount to an acts of apartheid prosecutable under Article 7(2)(h) of the Rome Statute;
2. Publish a bulletin to banks and financial institutions, putting them on notice to dismiss as inapplicable, Israel's terrorist designation of the six Palestinian organisations;
3. Communicate directly with, and recommend, that the European Union and Third States remove "terrorism" clauses as internal conditions placed on donor funding of civil society organisations in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT);
4. Call on UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ms. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, to examine the compatibility of the Anti-Terror Law, 2016 with International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law;
5. Denounce the application of the Anti-Terror Law, 2016 to civil society organisations in the OPT as an overreaching of Israel's domestic law to the OPT;
6. Call on Israel to repeal the Anti-Terror Law, 2016 effectively used to institutionalize the persecution of human rights defenders and entrench its colonial domination over the Palestinian people and their lands;
7. Urge Israel to immediately cease its systematic and ongoing policies and practices aimed at intimidating and silencing Palestinian civil society and human rights defenders, in breach of their right to freedom of expression, including through arbitrary detention, torture and other

ill-treatment, institutionalized hate speech and incitement, residency revocation, deportations, and other forms of coercive or punitive measures.

We thank you for your consideration. We remain at your service should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

- Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer),
- Al-Haq Law in the Service of Man (Al-Haq),
- Bisan Center for Research and Development,
- Defence for Children International-Palestine (DCI-P),
- the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC),
- the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC).

For more on the previous and ongoing attacks and allegations against 6 organisations, please see:

[Position Paper: Dangerous Designations, Israel's Authoritarian Dismantling of Palestinian Civil Society, an Attack on Human Rights and the Rule of Law](#) (2021);

[Designated Shrinking Space: Israel's Systematic Harassment Campaigns Against Al-Haq, are the Acts of an Illegal Apartheid Regime](#) (2021);

[Addameer affirms its commitment to protect and defend Palestinian prisoners](#) (2021);

[Occupation forces raid the offices of Bisan Center for Research and Development](#) (2021);

[Israeli forces raid DCIP office, confiscate computers and client files](#) (2021);

[Israeli occupation forces raided today the office of \(UPWC\) in Hebron](#) (2019);

[Statement by UAWC after Israeli military raid on our headquarters in Al-Bireh](#) (2021).