



## Israeli Government's attacks on six Palestinian civil society groups must be resisted

(26 October, 2021) 16 UK-based humanitarian, development, human rights and faith organisations working to support the rights and welfare of the Palestinian people condemn the Israeli Government's shocking decision to declare six Palestinian civil society groups as 'terrorist organisations'. We call on the International Community to publicly reject this move to obstruct the essential work of these organisations, and to continue supporting them.

On 19 October 2021, the Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz declared six Palestinian civil society groups as 'terrorist organisations'. The six include some of the most well-established Palestinian human rights organisations working in the occupied Palestinian territory including [Addameer](#), which provides legal services to Palestinian detainees and prisoners held within Israel's military detention system; [Al-Haq](#), a human rights organisation that has been internationally recognised for its work – including receiving the 2018 Human Rights Prize of the French Republic; and [Defence for Children International – Palestine](#), a child rights organisation that protects and promotes the rights of Palestinian children living in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. These organisations have long and well-established partnerships between international humanitarian and human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, Oxfam, War on Want and Save the Children. The risk of operations ending for some of those organisations, is an attack on human rights and will leave Palestinian children and others unable to access adequate and essential services.

The organisations targeted fulfil crucial roles in civil society, such as:

- Providing health care to the most vulnerable communities and sections of Palestinian society;
- Organising legal support to people arrested and detained in the occupied Palestinian territory, including children;
- Conducting crucial research and local programming to promote gender justice, right to health, and other broader civil society and human rights issues;
- Monitoring, collecting evidence of, and reporting human rights violations committed by Israeli and Palestinian authorities in the occupied Palestinian territory.

This announcement follows years of relentless delegitimization of civil society groups who seek to expose and end human rights violations. Groups such as Al-Haq and Addameer are critical of human rights abuses conducted both by the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority. We note that according to the [UN Human Rights Office in the occupied Palestinian territory](#), last Friday's decision published by the National Bureau for Counter Terror Financing of Israel "lists extremely vague or irrelevant reasons, including entirely peaceful and legitimate activities such as provision of legal aid and 'promoting of steps against Israel in the international arena'". We are concerned about the impact this decision will have on children and Palestinians across the occupied Palestinian territory.

The UK Government has committed to [supporting human rights defenders around the world](#), and has [called for the government of Israel](#) to "fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations and to allow them to freely operate in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories". Alongside other governments, it must now take urgent practical steps to reiterate its public support to Palestinian human rights defenders and humanitarian and development organisations.

**Signatories:**

ABCD Bethlehem

Amos Trust

Amnesty International UK

CAABU (Council for Arab-British Understanding)

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)

Christian Aid

Embrace the Middle East

Friends of Nablus and Surrounding Areas (FONSA)

Interpal

Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR)

Medical Aid for Palestinians

Oxfam GB

Quakers in Britain

Sabeel-Kairos UK

Save the Children UK

War on Want