

Urgent Call to Protect Palestinian Civil Society Organisations

STATEMENT

25 August 2022

CIDSE strongly condemns the raids on the offices of seven Palestinian civil society and human rights organisations.^{1 2}

On August 18, Israeli military forces raided and forcibly closed the offices of seven Palestinian organisations, six of which had been recently designated as ‘terrorist’ organisations by the Israeli government without any credible evidence³. Subsequently, the Directors of Al-Haq and DCI-P, two of CIDSE's partners, have been pressured by Israeli security services to stop the work of their organisations.

These raids come right after a decision of the European Commission anti-fraud unit stating it had not found any evidence of irregularities in two of these organisations, and a joint statement by nine EU member states declaring the Israeli government had not produced sufficient, credible evidence to substantiate their accusations of ‘terrorism’ and pledging to continue cooperation with the six.

The raids represent a further escalation of intimidation and suppression of Palestinian civil society by the Israeli authorities. They demonstrate how far the Israeli government is ready to go to shut down voices reporting and condemning human rights violations.

These organisations are amongst some of the oldest and most respected civil society organisations in the occupied Palestinian territory. They provide invaluable services to a large number of individuals, and their forced closure limits even more the space for a free, strong and independent civil society, indispensable for protecting human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. CIDSE and its members condemn these raids in the strongest possible terms. It calls on the EU and all other political actors to:

- Demand that the Israeli government immediately revokes the designation of these Palestinian civil society organisations, ceases its threats against their civil society representatives and stops interfering in their legitimate work;
- Continue to support and work with the six organisations designated as ‘terrorist’ organisations, including through funding and logistical support, and publicly condemn the Israeli government’s attempt to delegitimise them;
- Actively monitor and protect all seven organisations and their members and staff against any abuse or violation of their civil rights;
- Unambiguously condemn the Israeli government attacks on Palestinian civil society.

¹Al-Haq, Addameer, the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, the Bisan Center for Research and Development, the Health Work Committee (HWC), and Defence for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P).

² CIDSE also condemns the raid on the occupation of the Anglican compound of St. Andrew’s Church in Ramallah, where Al-Haq's offices are located, which resulted in damages to the building infrastructure.

³ Although not designated as a terrorist organisation, the offices of the Health Worker’s Committee (HWC) was also raided and shut down.