

Statement on Raid Against Palestinian Human Rights Organizations



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Statement of PCI after the raid against human right and civil society organizations

Pax Christi International stands in absolute solidarity with the seven prominent Palestinian human rights and civil society organizations whose offices were violently raided, contents confiscated, and office doors welded shut in the early morning hours of 18 August 2022.

We unequivocally condemn this physical assault by Israel and join the international community in demanding that it be held to account for its actions. Such repression and intimidation of respected civil society organizations must not be allowed.

In addition, the shameless destruction of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Ramallah by Israel's occupying forces must be widely denounced, especially by faith leaders around the world. As a Catholic organization, Pax Christi International urges our bishops in particular to support the Diocese of Jerusalem, which called these attacks "a violation of international law and a terroristic act against the entire community."

Six of the organizations, Addameer, Al-Haq, Defense of Children International-Palestine (DCIP), the Bisan Center for Research and Development, the Union of Agricultural Work Committee (UAWC), and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC) were targeted last year by Israel when they were designated as terrorist organizations.

In the interim months, states and donors reviewed the dossier provided by Israel and determined these designations to be totally without warrant. In July, nine European countries officially rejected the Israeli designations having found "no substantial evidence." They pledged to continue their "cooperation and strong support for the civil society in the occupied Palestinian territories." The lack of substantiated evidence should have resulted in the international community demanding that Israel immediately rescind its designation of these organizations as "terrorists" and reinstate them as part of the vital network of civil society organizations.

In the absence of substantial response, Israel was emboldened and appears ever more determined to criminalize and silence these organizations and to stop their critical work monitoring and documenting violations of human rights. By jeopardizing their ability to report such violations to international bodies such as the International Criminal Court and impede their partnership with other civil society and human rights organizations such as Amnesty

International, Human Rights Watch and B'Tselem, Israel poses an existential threat to Palestinian civil society.

As poignantly articulated by Khaled Quzmar, General Director of DCIP “Our human rights documentation and evidence-based advocacy exposing Israeli forces’ grave violations against Palestinian children has made us a target of the Israeli government for years.” Is it not time for the international community to ask: when will Israel consider the moral and ethical dimensions of its policies and actions toward the Palestinian people, rather than shield itself behind a self-established legal framework?

Pax Christi International supports all nonviolent measures to bring the occupation to an end and find a just resolution that secures the rights and dignity of all parties. We believe that such unprovoked, aggressive retaliation by Israel in demonizing such lawful, well-respected human rights and civil society organizations undermines any efforts to achieve a just peace.