

Addameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association
Al-Haq – Defending Human Rights
Hurriyat- Centre for Defence of Liberties and Civil Rights
Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights
Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies
Independent commission for Human Rights (Observer)

مجلس منظمات حقوق الإنسان الفلسطينية
Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council



Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights
Aldameer Association for Human Rights
Defence for Children International – Palestine
The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (Observer)

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PHROC: International Community's Silence Incentivises Israel's Continued Shrinking of Palestinian Civil Society Space

Gravely alarmed by Israel's intensified attacks against Palestinian human rights defenders and civil society organisations, the Palestinian Human Rights Council (PHROC) condemns international community's timidness and pusillanimity when addressing Israel's systematic, protracted, and institutionalised campaign of targeting, delegitimising and silencing of opposition of Israeli human rights violations, in an effort to repress, criminalise, and intimidate anyone who advocates for Palestinian human rights or challenges Israel's entrenched regime of settler-colonialism and apartheid.

Palestinian human rights defenders and civil society organisations have witnessed a distressing increase in Israel's harassment and attacks in the past month. The latest of these attacks took place at the early hours of 29 July 2021, when the Israeli occupying forces (IOF) raided the headquarters of two Palestinian civil society organisations: [Defense for Children International – Palestine](#) (DCI-Palestine), a human rights organisation that offers free legal aid, documents violations of international law, and advocates for greater protections, and [Bisan Center for Research and Development](#), a non-governmental organisation that seeks to develop and achieve the socio-economic rights of the marginalised Palestinians; confiscating computers, hard drives, and files. The IOF failed to leave any documents that list the expropriated items.

On 7 July 2021 at dawn, the IOF arbitrary [detained](#) Ms. Shatha Odeh, the Executive Director of the Health Work Committees (HWC), a Palestinian non-governmental health and developmental organisation, which was, on 9 June 2021, raided, had memory drives from the organisation's computers confiscated, and [forced](#) to have its office close for six months. Similarly, on 7 July 2021, the IOF raided the headquarters of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), a Palestinian non-governmental agriculture and developmental organisation, confiscated some of its contents, and delivered a military order forcing the office to close for six months. Notably, both of the organisations are registered Palestinian organisations, which adhere to Palestinian laws. Accordingly, the issuance of the so-called "closing of property" military orders infringes on Palestinian laws, in complete disregard of bilateral agreements and international law.

Using a different intimidation tactic, Mr. Salah Hammouri, a Palestinian-French human rights defender and lawyer with Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association is currently under the imminent threat of having his permanent residency rights

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in Jerusalem [revoked](#) for so-called “breach of allegiance” to the State of Israel. On 29 June 2021, the Israeli Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked [announced](#) the adoption of the recommendations to revoke the permanent residency of Mr. Hammouri, confirming her intentions to proceed with approving the process.

Attacks on Palestinian civil society organisations imply that many protected Palestinians living across the occupied Palestinian territory, especially in Area C, where HWC and UAWC operate, will be completely deprived of humanitarian services that only civil society organisations could offer, given the increased attacks by Israeli occupying authorities and Israeli settlers. Palestinian children, especially detainees, who are provided with free legal aid by DCI-Palestine and had their files confiscated, will also be severely affected by the aforementioned raid. This is seen with the current expansion of Israel’s settler-colonial enterprise and the ongoing denial of the realisation of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination.

Critically, such attacks are not isolated incidents, but rather a part of Israel’s policy of silencing of opposition, which ultimately aims to maintain its apartheid regime. The targeting of individual human rights defenders as well as Palestinian civil society organisations have been integral to Israel’s numerous attempts to shrink civil society space. These attacks include [death threats](#), [arbitrary arrests](#), [travel bans](#), [residency revocation](#), [deportation](#), [smear campaigns](#).

PHROCs stands with all Palestinian human rights defenders and civil society organisations in opposing Israel’s chilling campaign of repression and silencing. Acknowledging that the recent measures reflect Israeli egregious attempt to thwart critical human rights work, PHROC calls upon the international community to finally align itself with its legal obligations, and to urge Israel to immediately release Ms. Odeh, halt its legal proceedings for the revocation of Mr. Hammouri’s residency status, and cease any and all practices and policies intended to intimidate and silence human rights defenders and civil society organisations. We further urge the international community to recognise and address silencing efforts as part of Israel’s settler-colonial and apartheid regime imposed over the Palestinian people as a whole, and to take meaningful and effective steps to ensure international justice and accountability for Palestinian victims without further delay.

END

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