

PHROC Strongly Condemns Israel's continued attacks on Civil Society and Human Rights Defend

14 October 2026

On 13 October 2026, Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) raided offices it claimed were the offices of the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC) and the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer), as well as the courtyard of the Palestine Medical Complex (PMC) — the largest public medical facility in the West Bank — all based in Ramallah. Notably, the UPWC closed their offices and ceased operations in Ramallah in 2022. The IOF attacks are an unveiled attempt to incite against organisations, including inactive ones.

The IOF confiscated equipment, furniture and files from the buildings, deployed snipers at the entrance of the PMC and blocked people from entering and leaving the facility. In addition, they assaulted journalists covering the operation. A notice in Arabic and English was left on the premises claimed by the IOF as those of Addameer. The notice stated that Addameer, a prominent Palestinian human rights organisation had been declared “an illegal entity”, that Addameer was “exploiting the public's money” to support an alleged terrorist organisation, and threatened that “any dealings with this entity or with terrorist organisations will have severe consequences, as happened here”. This smearing of Addameer, a leading human rights organisation in Palestine, is the latest attempt by Israel to delegitimise Palestinian human rights work aimed at ending Israeli impunity, and, in particular, an organisation working to defend the rights of Palestinian prisoners, who are subjected to various forms of torture, inhuman treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, and starvation, and who face the threat of being subjected to Israel's proposed death penalty law.

The Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council (PHROC) strongly denounces the latest attacks by Israel, as the latest in a series of repressive measures aimed at silencing the work of Palestinian civil society, to entrench the maintenance of its settler-colonial apartheid regime of institutionalised racial discrimination and domination over the Palestinian people as a whole. In particular, Israel is systematically attempting to suppress the collection of evidence of its international crimes against Palestinian prisoners. This includes attempts to destroy evidence of its genocidal acts of physical and psychological harm, rape and sexual violence, against Palestinian detainees in its torture camps, such as Sde Teiman—acts which prisoners organisations have extensively documented.

In October 2021, Israel's Minister of Defense designated Addameer, UPWC, along with Al-Haq, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Defense for Children International- Palestine, and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees as so-called “terror organisations” under Israel's misused 2016 Counter- Terrorism Law, without providing evidence supporting such serious accusations. The designation was strongly condemned by UN Experts stating that the “misuse of counter-terrorism measures in this way by the government of Israel undermines the security of all”. They called on the international community to “use its full range of political and diplomatic tools to request that Israel review and reverse this decision”.

In August 2022, the IOF forcibly entered and raided the offices of the designated organisations and caused damage to and confiscated property, including equipment and files, from the above-mentioned six designated organisations, as well as the office of the Health Work Committees. Israeli soldiers rummaged through files, scattered and displaced accounting folders to the ground, knocked over coffee cups, leaving spillages, and trashed offices and bathrooms. More recently, between 28 June and 1 July 2026, the IOF arbitrarily arrested and detained 11 Palestinians for alleged membership of the Health Work Committees, most of whom were released on bail.

On 12 June 2025, Israel's primary ally, the United States (U.S.), sanctioned Addameer through Executive Order 13224. This sanction reproduced the above pattern of unfounded and unsubstantiated claims of support to terrorism. On 5 September 2025, the US further imposed sanctions against Al-Haq, Al-Mezan and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, three leading Palestinian civil society organisations working with the International Criminal Court to hold Israeli perpetrators of egregious international crimes in the Situation in Palestine accountable.

More than a year after the US arbitrarily imposed these sanctions, the international community and Third States have not taken adequate measures to protect Palestinian organisations and preserve the crucial collection of evidence that we operate. It is the whole international law system that States jeopardise by failing to take meaningful enforcement actions. The failure of Third States to intervene essentially grants Israel a green light to continue its draconian raids and persecution of Palestinian organisations and human rights defenders on the ground, destroying the institutions of the Palestinian human rights movement and eroding the last vestiges of the rule of law.

PHROC reiterates that these sanctions and raids are purely politically motivated—in particular by the upcoming Israeli elections—and only serve to create a chilling effect, silencing key actors in the fight for Palestinian survival and self-determination, through ending Israel's settler-colonial apartheid regime, illegal occupation and genocide against the Palestinian people.

Israel's widespread and systematic attacks on the fundamental freedoms of Palestinian human rights organisations and human rights defenders, denying the freedom of assembly and freedom of speech amount to a special kind of persecution, taking place within the context of Israel's ongoing occupation and apartheid. The aim of the persecutory acts, carried out with the purpose of supporting and maintaining Israel's settler colonial apartheid regime, further constitute an inhuman act of apartheid under the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

PHROC warns that Israel's continuous oppression of Palestinian civil society is contributing to its continuing genocidal destruction of the Palestinian people. Palestinian human rights organisations are targeted because they document Israel's violations, including the commission of ongoing genocidal acts, and seek accountability thereof. They are targeted because they seek to protect the Palestinian people from erasure.

In light of the above, it is paramount that Third States comply with their international obligations, first and foremost the obligation to prevent genocide. They must further comply with their international obligation not to recognise situations arising from breaches of peremptory norms of international law, and not to assist in maintaining them, as recalled by the International Court of Justice in its landmark Palestine Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024.

Palestinian human rights organisations and human rights defenders will not be silenced.

PHROC further reiterates our call on Third States to:

- Take concrete steps to ensure the safety and protection of the operations and staff of sanctioned and designated Palestinian CSOs in the OPT, unfairly and illegally targeted;
- Impose diplomatic and economic sanctions on Israel, in addition to a full arms embargo;
- Call on the European Union to immediately enforce the Blocking Statute or any other mechanism that can offer meaningful protection for Palestinian human rights defenders and organisations;
- Resume, continue, and even increase financial and political support for Palestinian society generally, and in particular, Palestinian CSOs' and international NGOs whose crucial work is aimed at ending Israel's settler colonial apartheid system and unlawful presence in the OPT, as well as its genocidal onslaught on Gaza.

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