



AIDA Stands in Solidary with Palestinian Civil Society amid Spurious Claims and Allegations

The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) strongly denounces the Israeli Minister of Defense' designation of six leading Palestinian human rights organizations as "terrorist organizations" and its imminent implications on NGOs and INGOs space to operate.

AIDA and its 80+ INGO members stand in solidarity with our Palestinian partner organizations, recognizing the invaluable work they carry out, under enormous pressure, to help improve conditions for a more just and equal society.

The six Palestinian organizations - Addameer, Al-Haq, Defense for Children International – Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, the Bisan Center for Research and Development, and the Union of Palestinian Women Committees have been working for decades advancing human rights for vulnerable communities throughout the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). These organizations have contributed invaluable to strengthening civil society and good governance, documenting human rights violations by all parties, protecting communities from rights violations, and providing much needed aid.

The designation of the six organizations comes after years of misinformation campaigns aimed at discrediting and delegitimizing local civil society groups by the Government of Israel and a network of lobby groups. This includes targeted misinformation, constant harassment, reputational attacks, administrative restrictions, physical assaults, and the detention of staff and the seizure of assets. These efforts serve to restrict the operational space for civil society working to document and address the human rights and IHL situation in the oPt and silence voices of opposition - all contrary to the principles of a just and democratic society. With these designations, these NGOs are becoming subject to the risk of prosecution by opaque military tribunals, prohibitions on publication, and restrictions on movement both locally and internationally.

AIDA calls on the international and donor community to reiterate partnerships with and confidence in the targeted Palestinian organizations and the broader human rights community in Palestine.

AIDA also calls on the international community to challenge these designations and the lack of due process. We urge donors to uphold business as usual in existing partnerships unless Israel provides, within a reasonable timeframe, solid and reliable evidence. Without serious proof or evidence, these allegations serve only to distract attention away from the efforts of human rights defense.

AIDA urges the donor community to acknowledge and help raise awareness that Palestine is one of the most regulated, monitored, and compliance-heavy environments in the world. AIDA encourages the donor community to approach these instances from a position of confidence in NGOs rather than reacting on the basis of unfounded allegations, legally flawed designations or the media pressure that such allegations bring.

AIDA values its partnership with Palestinian NGOs, and will continue to do so. AIDA also understands that increasing shrinking space targets all human rights and humanitarian actors in the oPt, including INGOs.