

# CIVIC SPACE COUNTRY BRIEF



# PALESTINE

CIVICUS MONITOR STATUS: **REPPRESSED**

# INTRODUCTION

Civic freedoms continue to deteriorate in Palestine with an escalation in surveillance, arrests, detentions, harassment, attacks and killings of protesters, journalists and human rights defenders over the past few years.

In April 2021, six Palestinian families who had been living in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in occupied East Jerusalem since the 1950s were [threatened](#) with forced eviction by Israeli occupying forces (IOF). Protests broke out across Palestine, with thousands joining in solidarity against the evictions. The demonstrations [were met](#) by teargas, stun grenades, rubber bullets, physical assaults and attacks and arbitrary arrests by IOF.

On 7 May 2021, Israeli police [entered](#) the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem during Friday prayers on the last day of Ramadan, injuring over 200 Palestinians. In response, Gaza's de facto authority Hamas [fired](#) a rocket into Israel on 10 May. Israel responded with an 11-day bombing campaign on Gaza, during which 248 Palestinians were killed. On 20 May, a ceasefire was agreed. On 5 August 2022, Israel [launched](#) a military offensive on Gaza, which indiscriminately targeted civilians and non-military structures, killing 32 Palestinians, including six children, and injuring 265 Palestinians. At least forty families have been displaced after their homes were damaged or destroyed by Israeli airstrikes. Protests, and their violent repression, continued for the rest of 2021 and into 2022, as did the forced eviction threats for families in Sheikh Jarrah. In May 2022, Israel's Supreme Court [ruled](#) that the four families threatened with eviction could stay in their homes until a land arrangement is reached. Earlier in August 2021, the families had rejected a deal which would have had them recognise Israeli ownership of their home, in exchange for the possibility of staying as 'protected tenants'.

## ABOUT THE CIVICUS MONITOR

The [CIVICUS Monitor](#), an online platform that tracks threats to civil society in countries across the globe, rates civic space – the space for civil society – in Palestine as “**Repressed**”.

The data provides the basis for civic space ratings, which are based on up-to-date information and indicators on the state of freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression. Countries can be rated as:

**CLOSED****REPPRESSED****OBSTRUCTED****NARROWED****OPEN**





In response to the increased violence, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council [established](#) a standing Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel in May 2021 – [without](#) the support of any western states – to address, for the first time, human rights violations perpetrated against Palestinians in all the territories under Israeli control, including Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The Commission of Inquiry issued its first [report](#) in June 2022. The report raised concerns about attacks on civic space and increasing efforts to ‘silence human rights defenders and civil society organisations’, including the designation by the Israeli Ministry of Defence in October 2021 of six Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organisations as terrorist organisations. The report noted that an immediate end of the occupation is essential to end the cycle of violence. Palestinians have to navigate the reality of an oppressive occupation in their everyday lives. Restrictions on their freedom of movement and exercise of their basic rights, forced displacement and evictions, violence by settlers and occupying forces, surveillance and harassment are manifestations of Israel’s institutionalised regime of apartheid.

Palestinian civil society [has been](#) campaigning against Israeli apartheid for many years. In 2021, a consensus formed on the recognition of Israel’s political regime and occupation of Palestine as apartheid. [Amnesty International](#), [B’Tselem](#), [Human Rights Watch](#) and the [UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967](#) (UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine), all publicly declared that the levels of oppression, discrimination and human rights violations, and the political system enacted by Israel to prioritise one group of citizens at the expense of another, have reached the threshold of apartheid, a crime against humanity.

In addition, violations of civic space and Palestinian human rights are committed by Palestinian authorities. Both Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank are responsible for harassing, detaining and attacking activists, journalists and protesters. In June 2021, Nizar Banat, an activist and outspoken critic of corruption by Palestinian authorities, [was killed](#) in the [custody](#) of Palestinian security forces, after being brutally and violently arrested. During the ensuing protests across the West Bank, dozens of protesters and bystanders were physically [attacked](#), arrested and detained.

On 3 March 2021, Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC). [announced](#) the opening of an investigation into the situation in the state of Palestine. The investigation covers all crimes within the jurisdiction of the court, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, that have been committed since 13 June 2014.

This research brief covers the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and the civic space violations perpetrated by both IOF and OPT authorities<sup>1</sup>.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Palestinians have to navigate the everyday reality of Israeli military occupation. The [military regime](#) under which Israel regulates Palestinians in the West Bank – but not Jewish settlers – is aimed at ensuring security at all times. Participation in protests, civil disobedience, membership of over 400 banned organisations, participation in political meetings and engagement in civil society activities are all acts that can be and are prosecuted under the military legal system. The military system means that trials are conducted in military courts, in Hebrew, which many Palestinians do not speak. Military courts offer very limited procedural guarantees and often hinder access to lawyers and evidence used for convictions. The conviction rate is [over 99 per cent](#). Additionally, Israel uses administrative detention to punish, silence and harass activists, journalists and all those who are perceived to constitute a threat to the maintenance of the occupation.

<sup>1</sup> This brief was drafted by Francesca Pierigh in collaboration with the CIVICUS Monitor. A special thanks to the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and Al-Haq for their review of this brief



[Administrative detention](#) allows Israel to hold detainees indefinitely, on secret evidence, without charges and without bringing detainees to trial. In a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, a number of Palestinian and international civil society organisations (CSOs) [recommended](#) that the use of administrative detention against Palestinians be recognised as a form of psychological torture.

Access to Palestine is also restricted by Israel. The [UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine](#) is regularly denied access to the OPT and [considers](#) Israel's pattern of non-cooperation as a serious concern. The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry was likewise [denied access](#) to the OPT, and expressed regret at Israel's lack of cooperation with the inquiry. In May 2022, a delegation from the European Parliament was [scheduled](#) to travel to the West Bank and Gaza to review the situation on the ground after the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. Israel [denied access](#) to Palestine to the chairperson of the delegation, and denied access to Gaza to the entire delegation. The mission was subsequently cancelled, and the delegation condemned 'Israel attempts to silence any form of criticism of the occupation'.

Parliamentary elections were scheduled in Palestine for May 2021 and presidential elections in July 2021. However, on 29 April 2021, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas decided to [postpone](#) the elections on the grounds that participation of Palestinians in East Jerusalem was not guaranteed. The [last time](#) Palestinians had the opportunity to vote was in 2006. Half of the eligible population in Palestine is between 18 and 33 years old. They have never voted in Palestinian elections.

The Palestinian legal framework is outdated and often in contradiction with international human rights principles. The Palestinian Amended Basic Law of 2003 [codified](#) rights to freedoms of expression and opinion, including the right to establish newspapers and media. In practice however, freedom of expression is severely threatened, by both Israel, as the occupying power, and the various Palestinian authorities exercising control over the occupied West Bank and Gaza. The West Bank and Gaza are subject to different sets of laws, because of the different authorities and their respective legislative powers.

A Cybercrime Law by Decree promulgated in 2018 (Law No. 10 of 2018), and applicable only to the West Bank, criminalises online freedom of expression, using overly broad terms such as 'national security', 'public order', and 'public morals'. It provides for harsh penalties, including heavy fines, the temporary blocking of websites and the dissolution of media outlets. CSOs in the country [consider](#) that the law amounts to substantial censorship, particularly related to criticism of the executive branch of the government.

Law No. 9 of 1995 on printed materials and publication, enacted by former president Yasser Arafat, [regulated](#) exclusively print press and media. It also included overly broad terms that can be used to limit freedom of expression and restrict publishers. Additionally, criminal codes from the 1960s for the West Bank, from the period of Jordanian rule, and from the 1930s for Gaza, from the British colonial period, are still in place to this day, and criminalise aspects of the freedom of expression, together with overly harsh punishments for acts considered crimes under the law.



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## RESTRICTIONS ON MEDIA FREEDOM AND TARGETING OF JOURNALISTS

Media freedom is severely restricted in Palestine, and attacks on journalists and media outlets are commonplace. Violations are committed both by Israel and by the different Palestinian authorities, although as [reported](#) by the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA), Israel commits the majority of violations against the media.

MADA [recorded](#) over 200 violations against the media committed by Israeli and Palestinian forces – as well as by social media companies – between January and May 2022. The vast majority of these were committed by IOF. Among the violations, the killings of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and Ghufuran Harun Warasneh stand out for their deliberateness and extremism. The paragraphs below offer examples of targeting of journalists. The list is by no means exhaustive.

### VIOLATIONS BY IOF

On 1 June 2022, Palestinian journalist **Ghufuran Harun Warasneh** was [killed](#) in the West Bank while on her way to a local news agency, Dream Radio Station. She was shot dead after crossing an Israeli checkpoint. An ambulance on the scene was [prevented](#) from reaching her by IOF. She had previously been imprisoned for three months for covering a pro-Palestine protest in January 2022, and was released in April.



Getty Images | Photo by: Guy Smallman



On 11 May 2022, Palestinian-US Al-Jazeera journalist **Shireen Abu Akleh** was shot dead in Jenin, West Bank. Her colleague **Ali Sammoudi** was severely injured in the same incident. Abu Akleh was standing with a group of journalists before the entrance of Jenin refugee camp. They had gathered to cover Israeli raids on the camp. She was wearing a helmet and a vest clearly marked as 'press'. Israel first claimed she was killed by Palestinian militants' fire, or by Israeli fire in response to Palestinian fire. Investigations carried out by [Bellingcat](#), [CNN](#) and others corroborated witnesses' testimonies and video material showing that there was no fire from the Palestinian side at the time of her killing. The evidence points to a targeted killing by IOF. An investigation conducted by the [UN Human Rights Office](#) corroborates the evidence that the shots that killed Abu Akleh were fired by IOF.

As reported by [The Times of Israel](#), on the day of the murder, Israeli military spokesperson Ran Kochav described Abu Akleh as 'filming and working for a media outlet amidst armed Palestinians. They're armed with cameras, if you'll permit me to say so'.

On 14 May 2022, the UN Commissioner for Human Rights [expressed shock](#) at 'footage of Israeli police attacking mourners at the funeral procession of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in East Jerusalem', held the day before. At least 33 people were injured.

The killing of Abu Akleh has been condemned by [numerous international](#) and [Palestinian](#) human rights organisations, and by a group of [UN Special Rapporteurs](#), who described her murder as 'a continuation of the high rate of attacks against media workers, particularly Palestinian journalists. More than 40 Palestinian journalists have reportedly been killed since 2000, with hundreds injured or targeted for violence. Women Palestinian journalists also regularly experience violence in the course of their work just for being journalists'.

Earlier in 2022, several physical attacks against journalists were [recorded](#), with firing of live ammunition, the deliberate use of rubber bullets to target the upper body, arrests and detentions. Many of the violations took place in connection with protests and clashes in April and May 2022, including Israeli raids into the [Al-Aqsa Mosque](#) in East Jerusalem during Ramadan. MADA [registered](#) an increase in violations during April 2022, with at least 21 journalists attacked. Physical attacks against the media represented the largest number of violations [registered](#) in May 2022 as well.

Among the people deliberately hit by a rubber bullet was journalist **Nasreem Salem**, who was [wounded by a shot to the head](#) by IOF on 15 April 2022. She was covering the events at the Al-Aqsa Mosque for the news organisation Al Qastal.

On 21 March 2022, Palestinian freelance journalist **Bushra Al-Taweel** was [arrested](#) and imprisoned by Israeli authorities after being stopped at a checkpoint in Nablus, West Bank. She had previously been [arrested](#) four times since 2011. In October 2021, she was [released](#) after 11 months in administrative detention. Al-Taweel regularly reported on Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel.

In its report assessing attacks against the media in 2021, MADA [registered](#) a total of 562 violations in the West Bank and Gaza. Of those, Israel was responsible for 368 attacks, representing 65 per cent of the total, Palestinian authorities were responsible for 123 attacks (22 per cent) and social media companies committed 69 violations (12 per cent). A total of 356 journalists were targeted through these violations – 75 of them women – and 32 media outlets. The vast majority of the violations for which Israel is responsible are what MADA considers the most serious ones: physical attacks, preventing access to cover events, detention, confiscation of material and killings.

MADA [reported](#) an increase in violations against the press in 2021, after it noted a decrease in 2020, due to social restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As protests started to take place again in 2021, so did clashes between occupying forces and journalists covering the protests. The events of Sheikh Jarrah, and the ensuing protests across the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, as well as Israel's bombing campaign on Gaza, played a large role in explaining the increase in violations against the media.



Twenty-seven journalists were [arrested](#) and detained by Israeli occupying forces over the course of 2021, all of them in the West Bank. MADA registered 155 physical attacks against the media, 42 per cent of all violations recorded.

On 5 June 2021, Al-Jazeera reporter **Givara Budeiri** was [arrested](#) by IOF while covering a protest in Sheikh Jarrah. She was detained for several hours, and her hand was fractured during the arrest. On 27 May, reporter **Zeina al-Halawani** and camera operator **Wahbi Mikeh**, working for pro-Fatah broadcaster Al-Kofiyya, were [arrested](#) by IOF while covering protests in Sheikh Jarrah. They were released on bail on 31 May and remanded to house arrest. They were also forbidden from communicating with each other for two weeks and banned from reporting in Sheikh Jarrah for one month, pending a heavy fine. **Latifeh Abdellatif**, reporter for Middle East Eye, was [assaulted](#) on 18 May 2021 while covering a protest in East Jerusalem. She was filming IOF arresting a father and his child when she was physically attacked in an effort to prevent the recording.

Several other reporters, local and international, were [attacked](#) and [injured](#) by IOF in May 2021 while covering the protests. Attacks included the firing of rubber bullets and stun grenades, beatings and seizure of equipment. Among those [attacked](#) were **Ahmed Gharabli**, photographer for French AFP, **Nasser Atta**, camera operator for ABC News, **Kareem Khader**, camera operator for CNN, and **Fayez Abu Rumaila**, camera operator for Turkish Anadolu.

On 12 May 2021, TV camera operator **Hazem Nasser** was [arrested](#) while passing through a checkpoint in the West Bank and held in administrative detention for six months. He was released on 23 December 2021. Journalist **Muhammed Asida** was taken into custody after a house raid on 11 May 2021 and sentenced to six months' administrative detention.

The Committee to Protect Journalists further [reported](#) on additional violence committed by IOF and protesters, including far-right groups, against Israeli journalists who covered the protests in East Jerusalem for Israeli media.

In 2021, 31 media outlets were [targeted](#) by IOF through closure and destruction, 30 of them in Gaza during Israel's bombing campaign in May 2021. Among the targets of Israel's Gaza bombing were the Al-Jawhara and Al-Jaala commercial towers, where several local, Arab and international media headquarters were located.

On 17 May, the office of Nawa Online Women Media Network, a news website affiliated with Filastiniyat, a women's rights and youth organisation, was [bombed](#), killing two civilians. On 15 May, Israeli war planes [bombed](#) to the ground the building housing offices of international media The Associated Press and Al-Jazeera. On 11 and 12 May, Israeli forces [bombed](#) the Al-Jawhara and Al-Shorouk office buildings, which housed over a dozen media outlets, local and international.

During the bombing campaign, three Palestinian journalists were killed when their homes were targeted. On 19 May 2021, **Yousef Abu Hussein**, reporter and news anchor for the Hamas-affiliated radio station Voice of Al-Aqsa, was [killed](#) when his apartment was bombed by Israeli warplanes. On 16 May 2021, journalist **Abdul Hamid Kulk** was [killed](#) when his family's home in Gaza was bombed. On 11 May 2021, Palestinian journalist **Reema Saad** was [killed](#) in an Israeli airstrike on a building in Gaza City.

Another way in which Palestinian journalists are targeted and limited in their work is through dismissals following Israeli pressure on international outlets. For example, in July 2021, Palestinian journalist Tala Halawa was [dismissed](#) by the BBC. Halawa worked for the BBC for four years. She was fired for a tweet posted seven years previously, during Israel's 2014 attack on Gaza. The tweet used a [hashtag](#) related to the Holocaust that was trending at the time. It was flagged with the BBC by a pro-Israel group, Honest Reporting, which led to the opening of an internal investigation and ultimately to Halawa's dismissal. Halawa issued an [apology](#) for her tweet, which she defined as 'offensive and ignorant'. At the same time, she defined her dismissal as 'trial with social media'.





In February 2022, German broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) [dismissed](#) five employees who were Palestinian and Lebanese nationals. An article published in a German newspaper accused them of publishing social media posts and articles that expressed antisemitic and anti-Israeli views. DW immediately suspended the employees, commissioned an external inquiry into the matter and dismissed all five journalists when the inquiry was completed. The integrity of the inquiry was strongly [questioned](#) by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, a CSO. Among other issues, the inquiry [stated](#) that the use of the hashtag #SaveSheikhJarrah in relation to the evictions in East Jerusalem was ‘inappropriate’ and ‘subjective Palestinian propaganda’. The journalists were not given a chance to contest the findings.

The International Federation of Journalists, the Palestinian Journalists’ Syndicate and the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians submitted a [formal complaint](#) to the ICC in April 2022. The complaint calls on the ICC Prosecutor to investigate the ‘ongoing, systematic attacks and use of lethal force against journalists and media organisations in Palestine by the Israeli security services’ as potential war crimes and crimes against humanity. Previously, [Reporters Without Borders](#) asked the ICC to investigate the targeting of 20 Palestinian journalists covering the ‘March of Return’ in Gaza in 2018, where Palestinian’s demanded the right of return and an end to the Israeli blockade.

## VIOLATIONS BY PALESTINIAN AUTHORITIES

MADA also [reported](#) a worrying increase of media attacks committed by the PA in the occupied West Bank in 2021. Citizens and journalists were attacked by Palestinian security services while participating in and covering protests after the killing of Nizar Banat, which broke out in several areas of the West Bank in June 2021. Although there was a decrease in violations committed against the media in Gaza, MADA believes this has more to do with self-censorship among journalists than any real improvement in the media climate.

Palestinian security forces [assaulted](#) at least five reporters who were covering the protests that followed the killing of Nizar Banat on 26 and 27 June, with women journalists particularly targeted. Reporters **Saja Alami** and **Fayhaa Khanfar** were insulted and sprayed with pepper spray by security officers, and ordered to give up their phones and threatened with arrest when they refused to do so. Khanfar was physically attacked by the officers and had to be treated for her injuries. Reporter **Najlaa Zaitoun**’s phone was snatched from her, and she was [beaten](#) with a stick by a security officer. She was also [threatened](#) with rape and subjected to sexist insults. Freelance photojournalist **Ahmad Talat Hasan** was physically assaulted while filming the protests in Ramallah, after refusing to give up his camera to security forces. Reporter **Shatha Hammad**’s phone was thrown to the ground and broken after she refused to hand it in. A teargas canister was fired directly at her later in the day, and she had to be treated for injuries.

Coordinated attacks against women journalists covering the protests represent, [according](#) to Wafa Abdulrahman, director of Filistiniat, ‘a chilling attempt to silence the women who have been spearheading the protests’. Attacks against women journalists take place not only while they are doing their job in the field; they continue online through defamation and smear campaigns. 7amleh, the Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, [documented](#) 22 smear campaigns against journalists and activists for their participation in protests after Nizar Banat’s death. Eighteen of those campaigns targeted women.

Incitement and defamation campaigns [included](#) the publishing of the names of seven journalists – four of them women – on a ‘[list of shame](#)’ on a Facebook page called ‘Children of Fatah Movement – Rapid Response’. The journalists were accused of connections with political parties or other external agendas.

In July 2021, Palestinian police officers [raided and closed](#) the office of **J-Media**, near Ramallah in the West Bank. The orders came from Ramallah’s public prosecutor and were allegedly related to a missing licence for the media operation. J-Media’s director denied those charges. The outlet’s Facebook page appears to be [operating](#) again at the time of writing. Alaa Al-Rimawi, the director of J-Media, had previously been targeted, [arrested](#) and detained administratively by Israeli security forces. He was [released](#) following a hunger strike.



Later in the year, Palestinian freelance journalist **Naseem Mualla** was [arrested](#) in November 2021 after covering protests against settlements near Beita and clashes between Palestinian civilians and IOF. He was tortured while in detention and [released](#) after 21 days. In Gaza, Palestinian journalist **Alaa al-Mashrawi** was [arrested](#) by Hamas Internal Security Forces in November 2021. Al-Mashrawi is the director of a local news website and a foundation that trains journalists. His house was [raided](#) shortly after his arrest, and some of his property, including two laptops, four phones and work documents, were seized.

On 20 January 2022, Palestinian freelance journalist **Abdulrahman Thahir** was [sentenced](#) to three months in jail by a court in Nablus, West Bank, on charges brought against him by the PA for defaming authorities. Thahir produces satirical programmes aired on international TV broadcasters, such as Roya TV in Jordan and Al-Araby TV in the UK, and discusses corruption and other political and social issues on his Facebook page. He has appealed against his sentence. He was previously arrested by the PA in August 2020 and held for a month. In October 2020, he was arrested by Israeli security forces for 28 days.

## RESTRICTIONS ON DIGITAL RIGHTS

Social media companies are also responsible for restrictions on online freedom of expression for Palestinians. MADA [reported](#) how, since 2020, Facebook (now Meta) ‘turned into a major violator of media freedoms in Palestine, following understandings reached by the Israeli government with Facebook in 2016, under the banner of fighting ‘incitement’ through social media’. As [documented](#) by MADA, 69 violations against media freedoms were committed by social media companies, mostly Meta, in 2021. For example, MADA [reports](#), in October 2021 the Facebook page of Quds News Network was temporarily blocked and many posts on the page were deleted.

As MADA [stated](#), the censorship enacted by Meta is not only specific to journalists, ‘but rather target[s] Palestinian content in general, by blocking or closing the pages of a large number of Palestinian activists and citizens, and therefore it has become a direct and severe threat to freedom of expression in Palestine’. Meta is particularly problematic in this regard because the vast majority of Palestinians are on Facebook, the most widely used social media network.

WhatsApp, also owned by Meta, is also responsible for a series of violations, including [deleting](#) the accounts of 14 journalists the day after the ceasefire in Gaza was announced, in May 2021. Journalists [received](#) a message stating ‘Your phone number is banned from using WhatsApp. Contact support for help’, without any further explanation. According to Reporters Without Borders, WhatsApp attributed the blocking to an unintentional error in moderation, and not to censorship: ‘WhatsApp’s rules on usage are in line with US legislation, which requires it to block an account immediately if used to circulate child pornography or any content promoting terrorism as well as groups representing designated terrorist organisations, for example. As WhatsApp has no access to its encrypted chats, it uses algorithms that scan non-encrypted information including the names of individual users and user groups, their descriptions and their profile photos. And these algorithms may have decided to ban accounts held by journalists who are members of chat groups operated by Hamas representatives’.

Additionally, as [reported](#) by MADA, six journalists’ accounts were also frozen on Twitter, three accounts were suspended on TikTok and three accounts deleted from Instagram.

As was the case for violations against offline journalists and media, digital rights violations increased sharply around the Sheikh Jarrah protests and the bombing of Gaza in May 2021. At a time when social media was one of the most important vehicles to share evidence of human rights violations, users were [systematically silenced](#) on an egregious scale.

In just two weeks from 6 to 19 May 2021, 7amleh [documented](#) more than 500 digital rights violations, pointing to an increase in the censorship of Palestinian speech online. The violations included deletion of content, including archived content, blocking or closing of accounts, hiding of hashtags and reduction in content reach. Facebook and Instagram together accounted for the vast majority of violations, 85 per cent. Social media companies told users that their posts





violated community standards or contained hate speech. Some of the content was reinstated after 7amleh intervened with the companies involved. At the same time, Israeli hate speech and incitement to violence against Palestinians on WhatsApp and Telegram – which led to two killings – did not encounter the same level of content moderation.

While social media companies blamed ‘[glitches](#)’ for the content takedown, civil society organisations connected the crackdown to [accusations](#) that Facebook has been ‘closely cooperating’ with the Israeli government, censoring Palestinian voices. The crackdown involved not only posts from people directly involved in the protests, but also from people expressing solidarity with Palestinians. A number of Palestinian and international CSOs launched a [campaign](#) in May 2021 urging Facebook and Twitter to put an end to the censorship of Palestinian voices on social media. Human Rights Watch [called out](#) Facebook for its repression of Palestinians and their supporters, and urged an independent investigation into the practices of content moderation in the context of Israel and Palestine. The international outcry at the suppression of Palestinian voices led to Meta [recognising](#) the problem in dealing with Palestinian content. Recommendations published in September 2021 by the Facebook Oversight Board, which reviews posts and makes decisions on content, [included](#) the opening of an independent investigation on the matter. In October 2021, Facebook [decided](#) to open the investigation. No updates are available at the time of writing.

Between 5 and 15 August 2022, during Israeli [attacks](#) against occupied Gaza, 7amleh [documented](#) almost 90 cases of content [deletions](#) or account suspension on the Meta platform.

Sada Social, an organisation that focuses on documenting violations of the digital rights of Palestinians, [reported](#) 425 violations against Palestinians in the first half of 2022, the vast majority of them on Facebook, followed by WhatsApp and Instagram. Violations include the deletion or suspension of accounts, deletion of content and the imposition of restrictions on posting. A survey conducted by the organisation with 195 activists and journalists [showed](#) that ‘97% of them have been subjected to digital violations due to content related to the Palestinian cause that they posted on their accounts’, 84 per cent of them multiple times. A longstanding tactic used by Israel to silence Palestinian voices and accounts on social media relies on the Ministry of Justice’s [Cyber Unit](#). The Cyber Unit, established in 2015, submits voluntary requests to tech companies, including Facebook / Meta and Google, to take down content it claims violates domestic laws or the companies’ community standards. In practice, this is done to suppress speech on social media. The number of content removal requests submitted over the years has [grown](#) immensely, and the vast majority of requests are accepted, with up to 90 per cent acceptance rates reported in 2019. A decision by the Israeli Supreme Court in April 2021 [provided](#) authorisation for the continued operations of the Cyber Unit by dismissing a petition filed by CSOs seeking to end its activities. Former General Director of the Ministry of Justice, Emi Palmor, is a [member](#) of the Facebook Oversight Board.

Israel is also putting in place legislative proposals to restrict freedoms of expression and opinion on social media. A draft law, nicknamed the ‘Facebook Law’, [would allow](#) Israeli public prosecutors to request that district courts remove any content from the entire digital space – and not just social media – which can be [considered](#) a threat or ‘incitement’ to threaten state security or a person’s safety. CSOs [expressed](#) strong concerns at the vague wording of the law and the potential repercussions on Palestinian digital rights. Previous attempts to pass similar laws in 2016 and 2017 failed, but the Ministerial Committee for Legislation approved the draft bill in December 2021. The proposed law will go to the Israeli parliament for approval.

## SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance tactics used by Israel to harass Palestinians include tracking their mobile phones, using spyware to silence activists and passing legislative proposals to further limit freedom of expression.

A proposal by Israeli authorities to install facial recognition cameras in public spaces was met with substantial backlash in Israel because of its implications for the right to privacy. However, the bill [is moving through](#) the legislative process. The same technology is also [used](#) by Israel in Palestine, according to 7amleh.



[The Washington Post](#) revealed in early November 2021 that the Israeli surveillance programme in the occupied West Bank has been undergoing a significant upgrade, integrating facial recognition technologies with a network of cameras and smartphones. Part of this is a technology called 'Blue Wolf', a smartphone app with a database of images and personal information of Palestinians, which the IOF have been building. The app flashes in different colours to indicate whether a person approaching 'should be detained, arrested immediately or allowed to pass'.

Additionally, in November 2021, Middle East Eye [revealed](#) that Israel has the capacity to monitor and listen to all phone conversations taking place in the West Bank and Gaza. All phones brought into Gaza are implanted with an Israeli bug and monitoring is constant for everybody who uses one of the only two mobile networks available in the Occupied Territory. According to Middle East Eye, 'at any given time, hundreds of soldiers are listening to the conversations being conducted. The audio monitoring falls into two groups. The first is Palestinians who are politically active or who represent a security threat in Israel's view. The second level of monitoring is used by Shin Bet, the domestic security service to find 'pressure points' in Palestinian society'.

Following worldwide [revelations](#) in July 2021 of the use of Pegasus spyware from Israeli company NSO Group to hack the devices of dozens of journalists and activists across several countries, Front Line Defenders [revealed](#) in October 2021 that six devices belonging to human rights defenders in Palestine were infiltrated with the spyware.

Three of the people affected are Ghassan Halaika, researcher with Al-Haq, Ubai Al-Aboudi, executive director of Bisan Center for Research and Development and Salah Hammouri, lawyer and field researcher at Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association. Two of the infected phones were hacked with Pegasus in 2020, one as far back as July 2020. Pegasus can fully infiltrate a phone undetected, providing full access to all contacts, data, location, camera and microphone. It affects not only the individuals whose devices are hacked, but also all other people they have contact with.

In a [statement](#) condemning the use of the spyware, seven CSOs placed the attack against the six human rights defenders within the broader context of the assault on Palestinian civil society. 7amleh [believes](#) that the use of surveillance and spyware technologies against Palestinians is part of systematic testing carried out by Israel before it can export the technologies and profit from them.

In November 2021, the US government [placed](#) the NSO Group on a trade 'blacklist' for 'engaging in activities contrary to U.S. national security or foreign policy interests'. The move means that NSO Group cannot buy parts or components from the USA without a special licence.

As an example of a more conventional surveillance tactic, the Israeli government [used](#) geolocation tracking to identify people present at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in May 2021 and sent them text messages threatening them with prosecution for participating in the protests, irrespective of whether they were actually demonstrating or not.

The Palestinian authorities also use surveillance. According to reporting by [7amleh](#), Meta [announced](#) in April 2021 that Palestinian security services, particularly the Preventive Security Force, hacked the accounts of around 800 political opponents, journalists and activists.





## FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

Protests are a way for Palestinians to express their discontent and push for change. However, protests are often met with violence by IOF as well as by Palestinian security forces.



REUTERS | Photo by: Ammar Awad | Gallo Images

## VIOLATIONS BY IOF

During protests in Sheikh Jarrah in May 2021, IOF used excessive force on protesters in East Jerusalem, and across the [West Bank](#), as was documented by [human rights organisations](#) and [media](#). Journalists and activists were also targeted as part of the crackdown.

One of the many examples of the violent crackdown took place on 4 June 2021, when activists [organised](#) a run in solidarity with Palestinian families facing forced expulsion in occupied East Jerusalem. Twenty-three runners were injured after Israeli police fired teargas and stun grenades and used physical violence against the runners.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine [reported](#) that in 2021 in the West Bank, 55 Palestinians were killed by using live ammunition, often during demonstrations, many of which were held to protest against settlements and their expansion, or to protest following the death of a community member at the hands of Israeli forces.

The violence continued in 2022. On 10 January 2022, Birzeit University in the West Bank was [stormed](#) by undercover IOF who opened heavy fire and arrested and injured several university students, including the heads of student unions.

In April 2022, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine [raised concerns](#) over the 'rising level of violence associated with Israel's 55-year-old occupation of Palestine'. Several incidents took place in April 2022, where Israeli forces used disproportionate force.

On 15 April 2022, thousands of Palestinians [gathered](#) at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem for early morning prayers. They were met with force from Israeli police resulting in at least 158 injuries and hundreds of detentions. IOF raided the site and used teargas and stun grenades against worshippers. In response to the use of force, Palestinians threw rocks.

At least 40 Palestinian protesters [were injured](#) following a march by Israeli settlers to the abandoned outpost of Homesh in the West Bank. IOF used rubber-coated bullets and teargas against Palestinians who protested against the march.

In May 2022, thousands of Israeli ultra-nationalists [marched](#) in Jerusalem's old city chanting 'death to Arabs' during the so-called 'flag march'. The group also [attacked](#) the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, throwing stones, vandalising cars and firing live bullets at residents.

## VIOLATIONS BY PALESTINIAN AUTHORITIES

Palestinian security forces have little tolerance of the expression of dissent. On 24 June 2021, Nizar Banat was violently [arrested](#) by Palestinian security officers during a night raid in Hebron, West Bank. He was beaten, pepper sprayed and dragged into a vehicle without being informed of where he was being taken. He died shortly after his arrest. The autopsy [concluded](#) that he died because of the excessive use of force by security officers.

Following his death, several peaceful [protests](#) were organised by citizens and activists, and met with escalating, brutal use of force by Palestinian security forces. On 26 and 27 June 2021, security force personnel, some in civilian clothes, [attacked](#) peaceful protesters, beating them with wooden sticks and batons, using pepper spray and confiscating mobile phones of people attempting to film the events. According to [Amnesty International](#), women were particularly targeted, many of them journalists, including with sexual assault,







On 3 July 2021, after a protest against President Mahmoud Abbas, security officers [arrested](#) Ghassan al-Saadi, a known critic of Palestinian authorities. Al-Saadi was subject to physical violence while being arrested. On 4 July 2021, three activists who gathered outside the Ramallah court complex to protest against Al-Saadi's detention were detained and charged with causing 'internal strife' and 'insulting the authorities'.

Palestinian forces brutally [attacked](#) a peaceful protest on 5 July 2021. Family members and supporters had gathered in front of a police station in Ramallah to protest against the detention of six men who had planned to attend a peaceful demonstration. Police beat protesters, dragged them on the ground, sprayed them with pepper spray and pulled their hair. At least 15 people were detained.

The violent breakup of protests, and detention of protesters, [continued](#) well into August 2021. On 21 August, Palestinian security forces [arrested](#) 23 Palestinians for holding a public protest, despite the protest having been reported in advance to the authorities as required. Many were arrested before the protest even took place.

The use of force by Palestinian authorities to repress peaceful protests shows a pattern of abuse which includes arrests and torture in detention. Human Rights Watch and the Palestinian organisation Lawyers for Justice submitted a [report](#) in July 2022 to the UN Committee against Torture alleging that the systematic use of torture by Palestinian authorities, both in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, may amount to crimes against humanity.

# FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

## TARGETING OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Human rights activists are routinely harassed, arrested and incarcerated, and frequently placed under administrative detention by Israel, without charge or trial. In October 2021, a group of UN special rapporteurs, led by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, sent a [communication](#) to the government of Israel highlighting concerns 'that the alleged arbitrary arrests of Palestinian human rights defenders and raids conducted on their homes without a warrant form part of a wider crackdown by Israeli occupying authorities against human rights defenders in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and is being used as a tool by the Israeli authorities to hinder their peaceful human rights work in the country'. Below are some cases of targeting of human rights defenders. The list is far from exhaustive.

**Salah Hammouri** is a Jerusalem-born Palestinian-French lawyer and field researcher with Addameer Prisoner Support in Jerusalem. Hammouri has been harassed by Israeli authorities for over a decade, and has been held in [administrative detention](#) since March 2022, after he was arrested in a house raid. His detention was [extended](#) in June 2022 and in [September 2022](#) for another three months. Previously, in October 2021, Hammouri was [informed](#) of the Israeli Minister of Interior's decision to revoke his permanent residency in Jerusalem, on charges of 'breach of allegiance to the State of Israel', even though people living under occupation are not obliged to show allegiance to their occupier. Hammouri's appeal was rejected on the basis of 'secret information' provided by the Ministry of Interior. His wife, a French national, was previously deported from Israel. Hammouri has therefore been denied his right to family unification by Israel.

Retired Palestinian lawyer **Bashir El-Khairi** was [arrested](#) in October 2021 at his home in Ramallah and placed in administrative detention. His administrative detention was renewed on 28 April 2022 for another six-months. El-Khairi, who is 80 years old, has previously been arrested and detained four other times and has spent over 17 years in Israeli prisons. He has been boycotting Israeli military and civil courts since 1968, refusing to recognise their legitimacy.





In July 2021, IOF violently [raided](#) the house of **Shatha Odeh**, used gas grenades to scare her family and detained her. She was [charged](#) in a military court for her work with the Health Work Committee (HWC), an organisation working to provide access to health services with a focus on marginalised communities. She was [released](#) on 3 June 2022. Odeh is a nurse and the director of HWC, as well as the chair of the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), a coalition of 142 Palestinian CSOs working on development.

**Juana Ruiz Sánchez**, a Spanish national and project coordinator for HWC, was [arrested](#) in April 2021 and detained under charges of ‘participating in the activities of an illegal organisation’, ‘being part of the board of directors of an illegal organisation’, ‘receiving and introducing money into the Palestinian territories’ and ‘receiving money for a false purpose’. She was released on parole in February 2022.

**Farid Al-Atrash**, Director of the West Bank office of the Independent Commission for Human Rights, was [arrested](#) by IOF on 4 July 2021 at a military checkpoint. The Independent Commission for Human Rights is a national human rights institution, whose main goal is to monitor the human rights record of Palestinian authorities. Al-Atrash was arrested for his participation in a demonstration in Bethlehem against the Israeli occupation in June 2021. He was released on bail on 12 July 2021, on the condition of not taking part in protests.



REUTERS | Photo by: Mohamad Torokman | Gallo Images



During protests related to the forced evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, IOF [targeted](#) prominent activists and arrested them in their homes, assaulted marathon runners trying to support the Palestinian families and fired teargas at protesting activists.

Activists and twin siblings **Muna El-Kurd** and **Mohammed El-Kurd** were at the forefront of the #SaveSheikhJarrah social media campaign against the expulsions of Palestinians from their homes. Ms El-Kurd was [arrested](#) on 6 June 2021 during a violent raid on her home in Sheikh Jarrah, while her brother turned himself in after summoned by the police. The siblings were [charged](#) with ‘committing acts that disturb public security’ and ‘taking part in riots’. After several hours of interrogation, they were released from custody. As [reported](#) by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Ms Al-Kurd had previously spoken at the May 2021 UN Human Rights Council session on the situation in the OPT.

After the death in custody of Nizar Banat in June 2021, several protests took place across the West Bank. Palestinian authorities and security forces reacted with a disproportionate use of force, a campaign of arbitrary arrests and retaliated against human rights defenders.

On 4 July 2021, **Mohannad Karajah**, lawyer with the Palestinian organisation Lawyers for Justice, was [arrested](#) by Palestinian police on charges of ‘denouncing the Palestinian Authority’, ‘illegal demonstration’ and ‘inciting hatred within the communities’. He was detained for around four hours before being released. On 11 November 2021, the Ramallah Public Prosecutor postponed the charges against Karajah indefinitely. It is unclear whether the charges will be pursued at a later stage, or if they will be archived.

On the same day in July, several activists [demonstrated](#) outside the Ramallah court to protest against Karajah’s detention. Two of them, **Jihad Abdo** and **Ezz El Din Zaaloul**, were detained on charges of ‘denouncing the Palestinian Authority’, ‘illegal demonstration’ and ‘inciting hatred within the communities’. They were [released](#) on 6 and 7 July respectively.

On 5 July 2021, lawyer **Diala Abu Aiash** was [arrested](#) during a protest in front of the police station in Al-Bierh. She was subjected to sexual harassment and verbal abuse by police officers. She was released a few hours after the arrest.

## ESCALATING ATTACKS ON CIVIL SOCIETY

On 19 October 2021, the Israeli Minister of Defence [designated](#) six leading Palestinian human rights organisations as ‘terrorist organisations’ under the Counter-Terrorism Law of 2016, which has failed [to meet](#) international standards and is vaguely worded. No evidence was provided to support these allegations, despite their far-reaching consequences.

Almost a month later on 7 November 2021, the same organisations were declared [unlawful](#) in the occupied West Bank under the Emergency (Defence) Regulations of 1945. The six organisations are Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al Haq, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P), Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) and the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees. Shortly afterwards, Front Line Defenders [revealed](#) that human rights defenders in at least three of the organisations concerned were under surveillance through Pegasus spyware.

The designation as terrorist organisations [poses](#) a direct threat to the funding of civil society in Palestine and its ability to function. For example, the Dutch government decided to [end its funding](#) to UAWC, despite an independent investigation finding that the organisation had no links to terrorism. The decision was widely condemned, including by a group of [UN Special Rapporteurs](#).





The Dutch government had previously suspended its funding to UAWC pending an investigation, a decision that gave credit to efforts to delegitimise the work of Palestinian CSOs. Similarly, in May 2021, the European Commission [suspended](#) its funding to Al-Haq, pending an investigation into possible misuse of funding. The decision was reversed in June 2022 after the commission [found](#) there were 'no suspicions of irregularities and/or fraud'. However, the effects of suspended funding on the activities of CSOs cannot be underestimated.

Israel's targeting of civil society organisations escalated in 2022. On 18 August 2022, the IOF [forcefully](#) entered, raided, confiscated and sealed the entries to the offices of seven CSOs, damaging property while doing so. The seven were: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al-Haq, Bisan Center for Research and Development, [DCI-P](#), [HWC](#), [UAWC](#) and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees. Six of the CSOs has been designated as 'terrorist' and unlawful in 2021, while HWC was [designated](#) as 'terrorist' in January 2020.

A statement by Al-Haq [describes](#) how IOF conducted the raid: 'Armed military forces broke into Al-Haq, systematically raiding each room and blasting the hinges off the locked doors of the finance department, the administrative office, the General Director's office, and the main server room, causing material damage. The military rummaged through files, scattered and displaced accounting folders to the ground, knocked over coffee cups leaving spillages, and trashed offices, and trashed bathrooms.' Following the raid, IOF [attached](#) a new door to the organisation's offices and welded it shut to prevent any future access, attaching a military order announcing the association's closure under Article 319 of the Emergency Regulations, of 1945.

Three days later on 21 August 2022, Shawan Jabarin, Al-Haq's director, [received](#) a threatening phone call from IOF summoning him for an interrogation. The person, who identified himself as Captain Fahed of the Israeli Security Service, stated that a 'personal price' would be paid if Al-Haq continued its work. Later that day, Khaled Quzmar, General Director of DCI-P, was [summoned](#) for interrogation at the Ofer military base by a Shin Bet agent. Quzmar, who was escorted to the base, was not permitted to have his attorney with him. He was [released](#) after spending two hours in custody.

Al-Haq sent an [urgent appeal](#) to the UN special procedures calling for the international community to take immediate 'targeted and effective action' to protect human rights defenders and CSOs in Palestine who are facing 'existential threats'. On 24 August 2022, UN experts [published](#) a statement condemning Israel's 'escalating attacks' on Palestinian civil society.

In a separate case, on 6 August 2022, B' Tselem field researcher Nasser Nawaj'ah was [detained](#) by IOF. He was blindfolded and handcuffed, taken from his home in a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank and held for 12 hours in an undisclosed location where he was questioned about his work.

Additionally, pro-Israeli anti-rights groups continue to engage in smear campaigns, defamation and [lawfare](#) – bringing CSOs to court on baseless charges with the sole purpose of creating time-consuming and expensive distractions from their legitimate work. The use of smear campaigns to discredit the work of CSOs in Palestine was documented in detail in a [report](#) by the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. Anti-rights groups controlled by the Israeli government work together with Israeli ministries to push Israeli propaganda internationally. They rely on conflating criticism of human rights violations committed by Israel with antisemitism and employ vague and unsubstantiated claims of terrorist affiliations to discredit and delegitimise Palestinian CSOs.

Efforts to hinder the work of CSOs also include raids, travel bans and seizure of equipment.

In June 2022, IOF [prevented](#) Ubai Al-Aboudi, Executive Director of Bisan Center for Research and Development, from traveling to Amman, Jordan to attend a two-day expert meeting with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Al-Aboudi was due to discuss Israel's policy and practices in the OPT and their economic implications. The travel ban comes following Israel's designation of Bisan as a 'terrorist organisation' and 'unlawful association'. Earlier, in April 2022,





Al-Aboudi and Sahar Francis, director of Addameer, [were banned](#) from boarding a plane to the USA while headed to the World Social Forum in Mexico, where the pair were due to speak about political prisoners and increasing attacks on human rights defenders.

In October 2021, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that an Israeli-registered group running a school for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation does not qualify for non-profit tax-exempt status. The ruling has far-reaching consequences, because, as Human Rights Watch [reported](#), it means that 'Israeli-registered groups operating in the West Bank will get tax breaks if they provide services to Jewish Israelis living in unlawful settlements, but not if they provide services to Palestinians living under military occupation in the same territory'.

On 16 August 2021, the headquarters of the Pioneers Association for Culture and Arts and the Pioneers Vocational Training Center in Aida camp in Bethlehem were [raided](#). On 29 July 2021, the Bisan Center, the headquarters of the International Movement for Defense of Children and their [Al-Bireh](#) branch were also raided. Offices were vandalised and equipment seized. The offices of HWC were [raided](#) in July 2021 and equipment was seized. The organisation's office in Ramallah was ordered to close for six months.

In March 2021, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas [promulgated](#) the Law by Decree No. 7 of 2021 Concerning the Amendment of the Law No. 1 of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Civil Society Organisations. The law, drafted in complete secrecy, without any consultation, was [rejected](#) in its totality by PNGO, which considers the law 'a vicious attack against CSOs'. Among other issues, an amended provision obliges organisations to present to ministries their 'annual action plan and estimated budget for the new fiscal year in line with the ministry's plan'. This reduces CSOs to the role of working for and responding to the orders of government ministries. However, following advocacy by Palestinian CSOs the law was revoked by decree.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

- Immediately cease all targeting of journalists, human rights defenders and protesters, and conduct thorough, independent, and impartial investigations into the killings and targeting of journalists, human rights defenders and protesters, with a view to ensuring accountability.
- Provide an environment where the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association are guaranteed – for both Palestinians and Israelis – in practice and in law.
- Immediately revoke the designation of Palestinian civil society organisations as ‘terrorist organisations’ and the military orders declaring them as “unlawful associations” and ensure that Palestinian CSOs can operate fully and free from interference.
- Respect the right to peaceful assembly by ensuring that peaceful protests take place unhindered, and refrain from using violence to disperse protesters.
- Ensure that human rights monitors have access to the Palestinian territories, including UN special rapporteurs and Commission of Inquiry members, as well as delegations from international organisations.
- Withdraw the draft ‘Facebook law’ and close the Cyber Unit at the Ministry of Justice.
- Make public any and all agreements in place with social media and web companies to restrict Palestinian content and voices online, and immediately cancel such agreements.
- Cease all surveillance efforts enacted against Palestinian civil society, human rights defenders, activists and media and ensure that independent and impartial investigations are carried out on such surveillance.
- Revoke all discriminatory legislation enacted against Palestinians across the territories controlled by Israel.
- Release all prisoners currently held in administrative detention and put an end the use of administrative detention.
- Put an end to the blockade of Gaza.
- Immediately put an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territories.



## TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

- Ensure an environment where the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association are guaranteed, in practice and in law.
- Immediately end the practice of torture and ill-treatment in detention.
- Immediately cease the arrests and detention of journalists, human rights defenders and protesters, and release all political prisoners currently detained.
- Carry out thorough and independent investigations into the use of force against journalists, human rights defenders and protesters with a view to ensuring accountability.
- Immediately cease the targeting of women, including women journalists and women human rights defenders.

## TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS

- Immediately resume and increase funding to Palestinian CSOs to help them survive attacks, and refrain from suspending funding in response to vague charges and smear campaigns brought by pro-Israeli groups.
- Regulate the work of pro-Israeli anti-rights groups in countries outside Israel.
- Strongly condemn and undertake effective measures to hold Israel accountable for targeting Palestinian civil society in the OPT.
- Support efforts for accountability for human rights violations committed by Israel and the Palestinian authorities in the OPT.
- Recognise that Israel's discriminatory laws, policies, and practices have established, and continue to maintain, an apartheid regime of systematic racial domination and oppression over the Palestinian people as a whole, and call for the reconstitution of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and the UN Centre against apartheid;
- Impose economic and diplomatic sanctions, severing cultural ties, ending all trade in weapons with Israel through a two-way arms embargo and ending military-security cooperation, banning any economic relations that perpetrate the apartheid regime over the Palestinian people, including by adopting legislation to prohibit trade with illegal Israeli settlements, supporting and calling for an annual update of the UN Database of all business enterprises involved in or with settlements, and implementing other effective counter-measures to reverse the illegal situation.
- Increase the level of engagement with Palestinian civil society, human right defenders and media, to increase their visibility.



- Engage with the government of Israel to put an end to violations of human rights committed against Palestinians.
- Engage with the Palestinian authorities to put an end to violations of human rights committed against Palestinians

## TO SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES

- Make public any arrangements with the government of Israel to apply different standards of content moderation for Israeli and Palestinian speech online.
- Review the content moderation policies for Palestinian speech and ensure they do not censor freedom of speech or impair Palestinians' ability to express themselves online.

## TO THE UN

- Ensure accountability, redress and the rights of Palestinian victims by supporting international accountability mechanisms, such as the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry established pursuant to resolution S-30/1, and engage with its recommendations.
- Recognise and address the root causes that entrench persecution and the imposition of apartheid over the Palestinian people and end all forms of collective punishment.