

October 29, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am writing with regard to the October 22 Israeli government designation of six Palestinian civil society organizations to share information we believe will assist the State Department in assessing the credibility of Israeli allegations against these organizations. Our organization, the Charity & Security Network, also urges the U.S. government to distance itself from this politicized attack on established human rights and humanitarian organizations and to use its influence with the Israeli government to push for the reversal of these designations.

On October 22, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz declared the Palestinian human rights groups to be “terror organizations” and accused them of operating as an arm for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Under a 2016 statute, the declaration enables Israeli authorities to close the nonprofits’ offices, seize their assets and ban support for their activities.

We understand that you and colleagues at the State Department have met or will soon be meeting with a delegation of Israeli officials who have or will share information used to justify these designations. We urge you to use extreme caution when reviewing this material and to conduct an independent assessment of the credibility of the sources and information used, due to the strong connection between disinformation campaigns aimed at organizations that support human rights for Palestinians and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other agencies.

The Charity & Security Network published a report in late September that chronicles the politically motivated campaign of disinformation, lawsuits, regulatory attacks and defunding efforts aimed at organizations that work in Palestine. The report, titled [The Alarming Rise of Lawfare to Suppress Civil Society: The Case of Palestine and Israel](#), includes detailed profiles of key groups carrying out these attacks and documents their coordination with the Israeli government. **We urge you to make use of this research in assessing the credibility and utility of any information the Israeli government proffers to justify these designations.**

The groups profiled are the NGO Monitor, the Middle East Forum, the Investigative Project on Terrorism, the Lawfare Project, the Zionist Advocacy Center, UK Lawyers for Israel and the Zachor Legal Institute. The report is available online at <https://bit.ly/3BiXQRO>

These recent designations by the Israeli government must be situated within the wider context of the abuse of counterterrorism and anti-terrorist financing measures to shrink civic space. It reflects a flawed Israeli designation process without meaningful due process protection. We have seen similar actions taken in other countries, relying on classified information to introduce administrative freezes and seizures. It is a global issue. Due to the seriousness of the designations, the clear political motivations underlying them, the threat they pose to civil society globally and the fundamental credibility problems documented in our report, we urge you to view any evidence offered by the Israeli government based on such sources with a high degree of skepticism.

Best regards,

Paul Carroll, Director
Charity & Security Network

cc: Hady Amr, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Israel and Palestinian Affairs
Christopher Le Mon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights,
and Labor
John Barone, Foreign Service Officer, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights,
and Labor