October 29, 2021

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

Re: Letter from U.S. Organizations & Leaders in Solidarity with Palestinian Civil Society

Dear Secretary Blinken:

The undersigned U.S.-based social justice, civil rights, and human rights leaders and organizations write to demand that you immediately and unequivocally condemn the Israeli government’s recent decision to outlaw and criminalize six Palestinian human rights and community-based organizations.

The Palestinian organizations currently targeted under the Israeli government’s draconian 2016 Counter-Terrorism Law¹ form part of the bedrock of Palestinian civil society that has been protecting and advancing Palestinian human rights for decades across the full spectrum of issues of global concern, including children’s rights, prisoners’ rights, women’s rights, socio-economic rights, the rights of farmworkers, justice and accountability for international crimes. They are: Defense for Children International - Palestine, Al Haq, Addameer, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, and Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees.² They are trusted partners in our collective work to secure human rights for all.

The Biden administration has repeatedly expressed a commitment to center and promote human rights worldwide and protect the role of civil society. These actions by the Israeli government are a clear attack on human rights. As such, we urge you to issue a swift rejection of this unprecedented attack on Palestinian human rights organizations and the attempt by the Israeli government to shut down, delegitimize, isolate, and chill a growing human rights movement. We agree with 17 UN Special Rapporteurs that “the freedoms of association and expression must be fully respected in order to enable civil society to perform its indispensable work, and cannot be undermined by the manifestly egregious misuse of counterterrorism and security legislation.”³

Smearing the promotion and defense of human rights as "terrorist" activity is a dangerous, well-worn tactic of authoritarian regimes and a shameful political maneuver to undermine the vital work of these organizations. In a joint statement, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International called the move “appalling and unjust” and “an alarming escalation that threatens to shut down the work of Palestine’s most prominent civil society organizations” and linked Israel’s emboldened authoritarian actions to decades of inadequate responses by the international community to Israel’s ongoing grave human rights abuses. This should change.

As groups committed to social justice, civil rights, and universal human rights, we have seen first hand the ways that the charge of “terrorist” and the so-called “war on terror” threatens not only international human rights defenders, but also social movements and marginalized communities here in the U.S.: Indigenous, Black, brown, Muslim, and Arab activists and communities have similarly faced silencing, intimidation, criminalization and surveillance under such baseless charges. A threat against the Palestinian human rights movement is a threat against movements for social justice everywhere, and in order to protect human rights and human rights defenders, all states must be held accountable for taking such manifestly unjust actions. While our government has long offered unconditional support to the Israeli government, our movements and organizations will always stand first and foremost with the rights and safety of people.

Therefore, we the undersigned organizations and individuals, call on you as Secretary of State, to:

1. Affirm that the Biden administration’s commitment to human rights has universal applicability;
2. Issue a public statement that rejects the Israeli government’s false accusations levied against Palestinian civil society organizations;
3. Publicly condemn and rebuke Israel for this authoritarian action, and call on Israeli authorities to immediately reverse their decision and end all efforts aimed at delegitimizing and criminalizing Palestinian human rights defenders;
4. Support Palestinians seeking the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights, justice and accountability, including at the International Criminal Court.

Sincerely,

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4 Nadya Tannous, Al-Shabaka, Policy Brief: Restricting US Military Aid to Israel in the Age of Normalization, September 14, 2021
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Labor for Palestine
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Media Education Foundation
MediaJustice
Middle East Children's Alliance
Mosquito Fleet
Movement for Black Lives
Movement Law Lab
MPower Change
National Association of Democratic Lawyers (South Africa)
National Family Farm Coalition
National Iranian American Council
National Lawyers Guild
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
National Students for Justice in Palestine
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala
NOVACT International Institute for Nonviolent Action
On Earth Peace
Our Revolution
Our Sacred Circles (OSC)
Oxfam America
Palestine Legal
Palestinian Alliance for Peace
Palestinian American Organizations Network
Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace
Palestinian Feminist Collective
Palestinian Youth Movement
PARCEO
Partnership for Civil Justice Fund
Pax Christi USA
Peace Action
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Progressive Democrats of America
Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
Project South
Quaker Palestine Israel Network-Portland
Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice
ReThinking Foreign Policy, Inc.
Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Sunrise Movement
The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
U.S. Labor Against Racism and War
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East
United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR)
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI)
US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)
US Palestinian Council
USA Palestine Mental Health Network
Veterans For Peace
Win Without War
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US
Women's International League of Freedom
Working Families Party
World Can't Wait
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

Local Organization Signers

1for3.org
Agroecology for All - California
American Iranian Friendship Committee (AIFC)

Arab American Civic Council
AZPal
Bay Area Women in Black
Black Christians For Palestine
Black Lives Matter Philly
Brooklyn For Peace
Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture Ethical Action Committee
California Scholars for Academic Freedom
Central Florida Popular Front
Chavurah for a Free Palestine of Kehilla
Community Synagogue
Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
Chicago Committee Against War & Racism
Christian-Jewish Allies for a Just Peace for Israel-Palestine
Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites - Seattle
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine
Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism - Corvallis Chapter
CommonWealth Kitchen
Concerned Families of Westchester
Corvallis Divest from War
Corvallis Palestine Solidarity
Coulee Region Coalition for Palestinian Rights
Culture and Conflict Forum
D8 for Justice
Dallas Palestine Coalition
Delawareans for Palestinian Human Rights
Demilitarize Portland-to-Palestine
Dream Defenders
East Side Jews
Ecumenical Peace Institute/Clergy and Laity Concerned
Falastiniyat
Florida Palestine Network
Food in Neighborhoods Community Coalition
Friends of Sabeel-Colorado
Friends of Wadi Foquin
Gay Liberation Network
Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace
Good Citizens Of DFW
Green Mountain Solidarity With Palestine
Green Party of Yavapai County
Harvard Black Graduate Student Alliance
Harvard Divinity School Students for Justice in Palestine
Human Rights Awareness: Palestine Israel/CD3 (HRA:PI/CD3)
Hurriyyah Collective
Indiana Center for Middle East Peace
Israel Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
Ithaca Committee for Justice in Palestine-Jewish Voice for Peace
Jewish Alliance for Economic Justice
Jewish Voice for Peace - Austin
Jewish Voice for Peace - Boston
Jewish Voice For Peace - Central Ohio
Jewish Voice for Peace - Chicago
Jewish Voice for Peace - Detroit
Jewish Voice for Peace - Hudson Valley
Jewish Voice for Peace - Indiana
Jewish Voice for Peace - Knoxville
Jewish Voice for Peace - Las Vegas
Jewish Voice for Peace - Los Angeles
Jewish Voice for Peace - New Haven
Jewish Voice for Peace - New York City
Jewish Voice for Peace - Portland
Jewish Voice for Peace - Sacramento
Jewish Voice for Peace - Santa Barbara
Jewish Voice for Peace - Seattle
Jewish Voice for Peace - South Bay
Jewish Voice for Peace - South Florida
Jewish Voice for Peace - Tacoma
Jewish Voice for Peace - Triangle NC
Jewish Voice for Peace - Tucson
Jewish Voice for Peace - Twin Cities
Jewish Voice for Peace - UCLA
Jewish Voice For Peace - Westchester
Jewish Voice for Peace Bay Area
Jewish Voice for Peace Portland
Jewish Voice for Peace San Diego Chapter
Jewish Voice for Peace- Cleveland
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ)
Jews Say No!
Justice for Muslims Collective
JVP-Central NJ chapter
Kairos Puget Sound Coalition
Kavod Boston
Kehilla Community Synagogue
Linn-Benton Pacific Green Party
Lutherans for Justice in the Holy Land
Madison-Rafah Sister City Project
Main Street Legal Services, Inc.
Meet a Muslim
Middle East Crisis Response
Minnesota Peace Project
Missourians for Justice in Palestine (MJP)
MSA West
Mujeres Unidas y Activas
Muslim Justice League
Nevada Green Party USA
Nevadans for Palestinian Human Rights
New Hampshire Palestine Education Network
NorCal Sabeel
Northern New Jersey Jewish Voice for Peace
Occupation Free DC
Occupy Bergen County
Oregon Coalition for Land and Peoples' Rights
Our Revolution Colorado Springs CD5
Our Revolution Florida
Our Revolution Northern Virginia
Pacific Green Party of Oregon
Palestine Solidarity Committee - Seattle
Palestine Teaching Trunk
Palestinian American Community Center
Parable of the Sower Intentional Community Cooperative
PATOIS Film Festival, New Orleans
Peace & Planet News
Peace Action - Chicago Area
Peace Action - New Hampshire
Peace Action - New York State
Peace Action - Wisconsin
Pittsburgh Palestine Solidarity Committee
Progressive Jews of St. Louis (ProJoSTL)
Progressive Peace Coalition
Queer Mikveh Project
Reject Raytheon Asheville
Rural Education Action Project, DBA Rural Vermont
Sacramento Regional Coalition for Palestinian Rights
Sacred Monsters Havurah
Santa Feans for Justice in Palestine
Schaumburg Area Progressives
Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ) NYC
St. Louis Friends of Bethlehem
Students for Justice in Palestine - Rutgers New Brunswick
Students for Justice in Palestine - Seattle University
Students for Justice in Palestine - UMass Amherst
SU Total Abolition Coalition
SURJ Lower Columbia & SWWA
Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville
Syracuse Peace Council
Tackling Torture at the Top
The Holy Land Ministry at Spirit of Grace, Beaverton Oregon
The Lace Midrash
The Whatcom Peace & Justice Center
Tikkun Olam Chavurah
Tree of Life Educational Fund
Tuck Away At Global Village Farm
Tufts Students for Justice in Palestine
Tzedek Chicago
Unite Oregon
United Methodists' Holy Land Task Force
University of the Wild
Veterans for Peace - Chapter 157 Eisenhower
Veterans for Peace - Hector Black Chapter
Veterans for Peace - Santa Fe Chapter
Veterans For Peace - Smedley Butler Brigade Chapter 9
Veterans For Peace Linus Pauling Chapter 132
Virginia Coalition for Human Rights (VCHR)
Voices for Justice in Palestine
Washington Advocates for Palestinian Rights
Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice, and the Environment
We Refuse to Be Enemies
Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
White People for Black Lives  
White Coats for Black and Indigenous Lives  
Women Against Military Madness  
Women in Black Union Square  
Women of a Certain Age

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Minnesota Branch  
Yemeni Liberation Movement

Partial list of individual signers - affiliations listed for identification purposes only

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Rania Batrice, Palestinian Advocate & Activist  
Gina Belafonte, Executive Director at Sankofa.org, Civil and Human Rights Activist  
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Sen. Dwight Bullard, Former Florida State Senator  
Professor Marjorie Cohn, Past President, National Lawyers Guild  
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Hassan El-Tayyab, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)  
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James Lafferty, Governing Board, ACLU of Southern California  
Allan Malkis, Congregation Or Emet  
Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani, New York State Assembly  
Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes, New York State Assembly  
Mari Morales-Williams, Educators for Consent Culture  
Rabbi David Mivasair, Ahavat Olam Synagogue  
Greg Nammacher, President, SEIU Local 26  
Loubna Qutami, Asian American Studies, UCLA  
Tarso Ramos, Political Research Associates  
April Rosenblum, Author, The Past Didn't Go Anywhere  
Dr. Penny Rosenwasser, Kehilla Synagogue  
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Daniel Segal, Professor of Anthropology and Professor of History, Pitzer College
Azadeh Shahshahani, Legal & Advocacy Director, Project South; past president, National Lawyers Guild
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