

# J-Link Coordinating Committee

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Dear J-Link Supporters

In October 2021, Defence Minister Benny Gantz declared that six Palestinian Civil Society organizations working in the West Bank were terrorist organizations. The apparent intent was to suppress their human rights advocacy and deprive these well-known organizations of international funding. Despite repeated calls for the Israeli government to offer evidence to substantiate its claim, none has been provided. J-Link wrote a letter to Minister Gantz on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, raising doubts about the legitimacy and soundness of that decision. We did not receive a reply. [See attached Letter]

Investigations by several European countries found no support for Gantz's claims. Instead, the assumption was that Israel's actions were motivated by a desire to block an appeal to the International Criminal Court to hold Israel accountable for human rights violations in the West Bank.

In addition, the European Union found that allegations of misuse of EU funds by these Palestinian CSOs were unsubstantiated. Accordingly, it stated that "The EU will continue to stand by international law and support CSOs that have a role to play in promoting international law, human rights, and democratic values."

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Israeli army escalated its actions with a surprise raid on each of these Civil Society organizations, blowing down doors, upturning files, confiscating documents, and leaving a military order outlawing these organizations – all in the absence of evidence to justify this violent intrusion.

This action mirrors other escalations, such as expulsion from the village of Masafer Yatta, home demolitions, and violence directed at Palestinians by settlers with impunity, all testing Israel's commitment to human rights and justice for Palestinians in the West Bank.

We call on all organizations that stand for the protection of human rights, due process, and the integrity of Israel's government and its armed forces, to demand that Minister Gantz either produce substantiating evidence immediately or reverse the military order outlawing these civil society organizations.

With great urgency, we call on each of your organizations to direct your concerns to the Israeli government,

Yours,

Ken Bob (Ameinu, U.S.A.), Giorgio Gomel (Jcall Europe, Italy), Barbara Landau (JSpace, Canada), Alon Liel (PWG, Israel), Pablo Lumerman (J Amlat, Argentina), Gabriella Saven (JDI, South Africa), Aya Tamir-Regev (Australian Representative).

J-Link is an international network of progressive Jewish organizations. We share a love of Israel and a commitment to democracy, human rights, religious pluralism, and a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe in the values enshrined in Israel's Declaration of Independence, which promise "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex." For more visit: [www.jlinknetwork.org](http://www.jlinknetwork.org)