

14 November 2021 - The decision on 7 November of the Military Commander in the West Bank to declare by Military Orders the six Palestinian NGOs as unauthorized in the West Bank deepens the concern of the UN Agencies and the Association International Development Agencies (AIDA), working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). The decision is a further erosion of civic and humanitarian space and stands to significantly constrain the work of the six organisations which have worked with the international community, including the UN, for decades, providing essential services to countless Palestinians.

“These allegations are taken very seriously. To date, none of the UN agencies nor AIDA organisations have received written documentation which could serve as a basis for the allegations”, said United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the OPT, Lynn Hastings. She added that “we will continue to engage with all relevant partners for more information”.

Counter-terrorism legislation must be in accordance with obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, which include full respect for the rights to freedom of association and expression. It cannot be applied to legitimate human rights and humanitarian work; the breadth of the Israeli 2016 Anti-Terrorism legislation and its impact on the presumption of innocence present serious concerns under international law.

With our strong commitment to the indispensable role of civil society in democratic life and in finding peaceful solutions to conflict, many of us work with and some financially support these organizations. Past allegations of misuse of our funds by Palestinian civil society organization partners have not been substantiated. We will continue to stand by international law and civil society organizations that promote international humanitarian law, human rights and democratic values.

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