

UN AGENCIES¹ AND THE ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES² WORKING IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY URGE THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL TO ALLOW HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTINUE THEIR WORK.

Ramallah (18 August 2022) - This morning, Israeli Forces broke into, searched and sealed the offices of seven Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organizations³ in Ramallah in Area A of the occupied West Bank. Their property was confiscated and destroyed and military orders closing the offices were left at the premises.

The United Nations and its partners take seriously allegations of funding terrorism and the Israeli designations of these organizations as “terror organizations” and/or “unlawful”. Despite offers to review the allegations to determine if funds have been diverted, Israeli authorities have not given any compelling evidence to the United Nations Agencies nor its NGO partners working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to support these designations. Several Member States recently announced that the evidence which was shared with them does not justify the designations.

The attempted closures of these organization offices represent the latest in a series of actions by Israel that are further limiting the ability of human rights, humanitarian and development work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which affect all institutions working to promote human rights, development and delivering assistance.

We reiterate our November 2021 statement: counter-terrorism legislation must be in accordance with obligations under international law, in particular, international humanitarian law and 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.

We urge the Government of Israel to refrain from any action that would prevent these organizations from continuing their critical human rights, humanitarian and development work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

¹ Representing United Nations development and humanitarian entities, agencies, funds and programmes

² AIDA represents 83 International NGOs working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

³ The organizations affected are: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association; Al Haq; Bisan Center for Research and Development; Defense for Children International – Palestine; Health Work Committees (HWC); Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC); and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC).