

To the attention of:

Mr Josep Borell – EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

**Re: EU-Israel Association Council meeting and Israel's attack on Palestinian human rights organisations**

Brussels, 29th August 2022

Dear Mr Borell,

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, Israeli occupation forces invaded the offices of 7 of the most important and internationally recognized Palestinian human rights organizations: Addameer - a prisoners support association, Al Haq - a human rights association, Bisan - a research and development center for marginalized palestinian communities, Defense for Children International - Palestine, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Union of Palestinian Women Committees and Health Workers Committees. Office doors were broken down, equipment was confiscated and military orders were issued declaring the forcible closure of the NGOs in the name of "*security in the region, and to combat an infrastructure of terrorism*".

After the recent attacks on the Gaza Strip, after the deadly incursions of the occupation army into Palestinian cities and the successive waves of arrests in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities are once again attacking organisations that protect the rights of Palestinian civil society as a whole.

**Israel raided and shut down the NGO offices exactly a month after EU ministers gave green light to hold the EU-Israel Association Council meeting.** It is clear that Israel moved against those NGOs while knowing the EU preparation process for the Association Council was underway. Shutting down human rights NGOs, a hallmark of authoritarian regimes, is an affront to core EU principles.

Holding the EU-Israel Association Council meeting and talking about "shared values" while Israel goes on to liquidate EU-funded groups is a slap in the face to the EU.

All of this is happening while a process of de facto annexation is taking place, displacement of Palestinians in various parts of the West Bank (such as in Masafer Yatta), dismantling of the two state solution, killing of Palestinians, cementing of apartheid and flouting of international law and human rights.

In your own statement, issued on 22 of August you declared that Israel's „actions are not acceptable.”

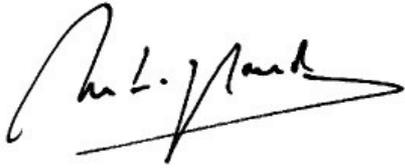
Palestinian human rights organizations, their leaders, their activists and their offices must be protected so that they can carry out their mission, which is absolutely essential for the defense of the Palestinian population and the advancement of the cause of law in international forums. In a huge display of solidarity, Palestinians have undertaken to reopen the NGO offices that were closed by the occupier. But occupying forces could return at any time.

This is no longer a time for half-hearted declarations. The European Union must **urgently condemn** in the clearest terms the Israeli abuses against Palestinian NGOs and **demand the immediate cancellation of the government decrees and military orders** that have targeted these groups since October 2021.

It is the responsibility of the European Union to take all necessary retaliatory measures against the Israeli government so that it puts an end to a policy worthy of the most totalitarian states.

Therefore, we call on you, as EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, to actively facilitate the discussion amongst member states to revoke the upcoming EU-Israel Association Council meeting.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michel Legrand', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michel Legrand

ECCP President