

Addameer won't cut aid after Israeli forces raided offices in West Bank



Ramallah, September 21 (RHC)-- The Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, which advocates the rights of Palestinian inmates, has strongly condemned the recent raid by Israeli forces on its offices in the occupied West Bank, emphasizing that such acts of aggression will not prevent it from performing its primary duties.

“The organization will continue to support Palestinian prisoners, and to fight all human rights violations they suffer from, including torture, arbitrary detention and unfair trials,” Addameer said in a statement.

“Addameer sees this (early Thursday) raid as a part of ongoing and systematic attacks against the Palestinian civil society organization. Those attacks are targeting the organizations that have a role in exposing the Occupation's (Israel's) violations and demanding accountability for those violations. This is, additionally, part of the Occupation's campaign to reduce the scope, de-legitimize and de-fund those human rights and civil society organizations,” the Ramallah-based group pointed out.

The Palestinian human rights group said Israeli soldiers broke into its offices at around 2 a.m. local time on Thursday (2300 GMT Wednesday), and ransacked them. The troops “stole five laptops, memory

cards, three laptop memories, one laptop card, [and] several books.” This is the third time Israeli forces have raided Addameer’s offices. Previous raids took place in 2002 and 2012.

Human rights groups issued strong condemnations of the raid by Israeli forces. Amnesty International described the raid as “part of a wider crackdown on Palestinian human rights and civil society organizations and their staff.”

“The chilling raid by Israeli forces against Addameer demonstrates the Israeli authorities’ clear determination to crush peaceful activism and silence NGOs. This was a sinister and calculated attack designed to curtail Addameer’s vital human rights work,” Saleh Higazi, Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International, said.

He added: “Israeli authorities have been sending a clear message to Palestinian civil society: anyone who dares to speak out about Israeli human rights violations ... risks coming under attack.”

“Arbitrary restrictions on movement, attacks on human rights and civil society organizations and human rights defenders can never be justified. They must end now, and those responsible must be held accountable,” Higazi pointed out.

Meanwhile, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel (Adalah), defending the rights of Palestinian Arabs in Israel, said it “considers this raid a new step in Israel’s policy of restricting Palestinian human rights institutions.”

“This Israeli military incursion is a direct attack on human rights work in Palestine, and lays bare Israel’s continuing crackdown on civil society institutions and their sources of funding, and reveals ongoing its efforts to defame and incite against human rights defenders,” Adalah stated.

According to Palestinian media sources, Israeli authorities have recently stepped up crackdown on civil society and have targeted organizations, which are calling for an end to Israel’s occupation and accountability for crimes under international law, including through boycotts as a form of advocacy.

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