

Arab League denounces Israeli designation of Palestinian rights groups as terrorist



Cairo, October 26 (RHC)-- The Arab League has condemned Israel for placing six Palestinian human rights groups on the regime's so-called terror list, stressing that the move proves once again the "racist and terrorist nature" of the occupying regime.

Israel's ministry of military affairs said in a statement that it had designated six civil society groups of Addameer, al-Haq, Defense for Children Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Bisan Center for Research and Development, and the Union of Palestinian Women Committees as "terrorist organizations."

The decision will authorize the regime to effectively outlaw the activities of these civil society groups, close their offices, seize their assets, and arrest and jail their staff members. Furthermore, Tel Aviv will

also prohibit funding or even publicly expressing support for the groups' activities.

Israel's ministry claims the groups have ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PLFP), a Palestinian resistance movement, alleging that they are funneling donor aid to anti-Israel resistance groups.

On Sunday, the General Secretariat of the Arab League lambasted in a statement the Israel's decision, stressing that such a move "affirms the colonial, racist, and terrorist nature of the Israeli occupation, its policies, and practices", Palestine's official Wafa news agency reported.

The Arab League also denounced the decision as "another link" in the chain of undermining the right to civil and human rights work in the occupied Palestinian territories.

While condemning Israel's policies and practices, the pan-Arab body stressed that such practices, including the regime's recent decision against human rights defenders and organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories, aim to halt human rights work and impede the monitoring and documentation of ongoing violations in the occupied territories.

The Arab League demanded Israel's accountability and emphasized its support for the Palestinians' struggle. It also called on the international community, particularly international civil society organizations, to assume their responsibilities and support their Palestinian counterparts that advocate for justice and expose and slam Tel Aviv's policies.

Israel's move has already drawn criticism from several human rights watchdogs. The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement and several American legislators denounced Israel's decision.

Separately on Sunday, US Congressman André Carson said Tel Aviv's move would harm countless people who depend on these organizations for lifesaving support, Wafa reported.

"I strongly oppose Israel's blanket decision to shut down 6 prominent Palestinian human rights organizations doing important humanitarian work in the region," he tweeted. "This decision is based on false characterizations, and will harm countless people who depend on these organizations for lifesaving support," Carson further said.

Moreover, the United Nations on Sunday expressed concern over Israel's controversial and provocative decision against six civil society groups, saying that in this case, anti-terror laws were employed to block legitimate human rights and humanitarian work.

"Counter-terrorism legislation must not be used to constrain legitimate human rights and humanitarian work," the UN Human Rights Office in the occupied Palestinian territory said in a statement, Wafa reported.

"The designation decisions published by the National Bureau for Counter Terror Financing of Israel list extremely vague or irrelevant reasons, including entirely peaceful and legitimate activities such as the provision of legal aid and the promotion of steps against Israel in the international arena," it added.

The world body further called on Tel Aviv "to fully respect the rights to freedom of association and expression, without any interference or harassment against the organizations or their staff."

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