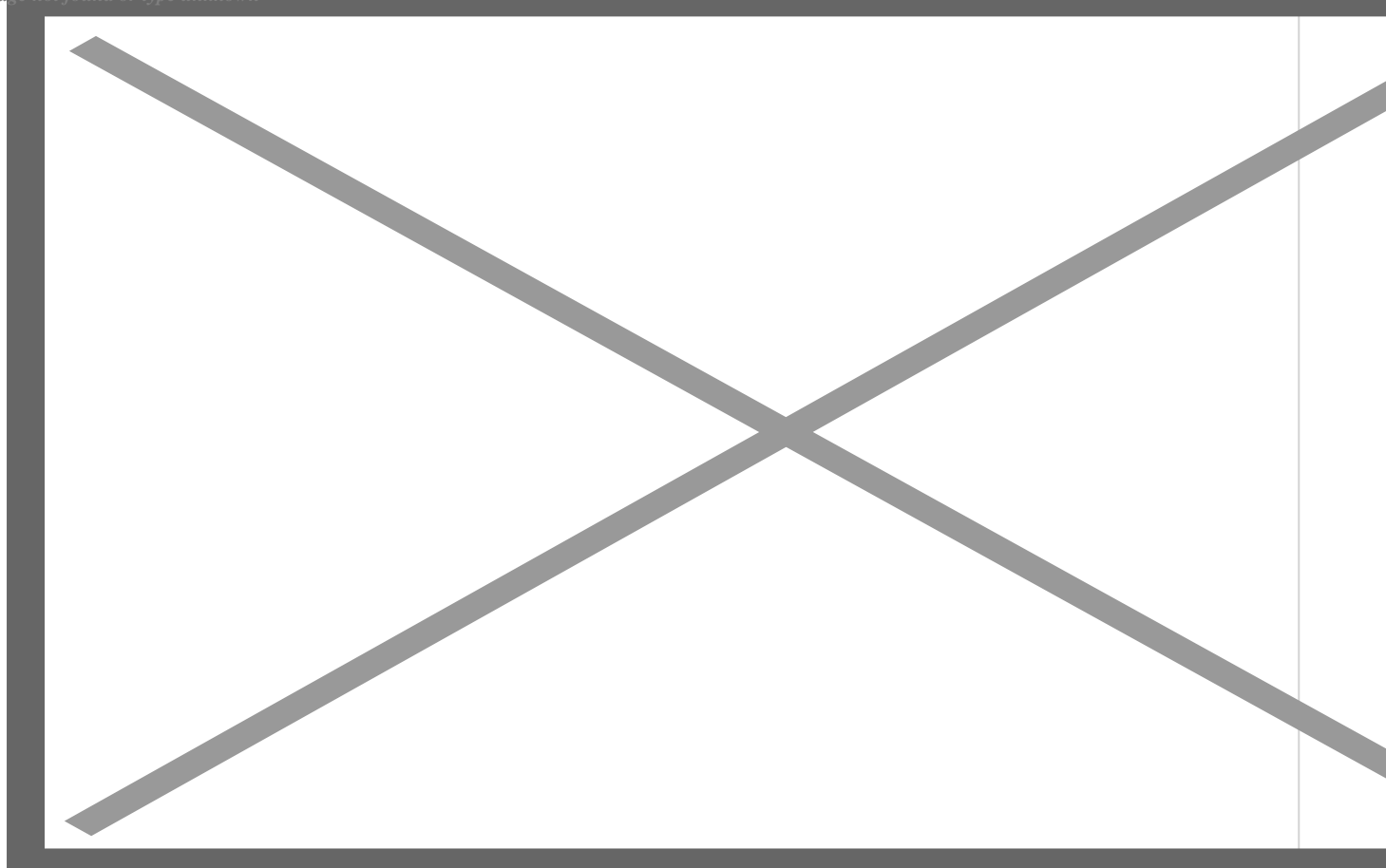


UN rights chief blasts Israel's labeling of Palestinian human rights bodies

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Geneva, October 27 (RHC)-- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights blasts the Israeli regime's recent "terrorist" designation of six Palestinian civil society organizations, describing the move as an attack on defenders of human rights.

Israel's Minister of Military Affairs Benny Gantz said in a statement that the ministry had so designated the organizations of Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, al-Haq, Defense for Children International – Palestine, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Bisan Center for Research and Development, and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees.

In a statement on Tuesday, however, the UN human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, called the move an attack on human rights defenders, on freedoms of association, opinion and expression and on the right to public participation. The decision should be immediately revoked, she added.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Palestine Liberation Organization say the move is unlawful and a flagrant violation of international law. "Claiming rights before a UN or other international body is not an act of terrorism, advocating for the rights of women in the occupied Palestinian territory is not terrorism, and providing legal aid to detained Palestinians is not terrorism," Bachelet said.

Her office called the concerned organizations some of the most reputable human rights and humanitarian groups in the occupied Palestinian territories that have worked closely with the UN for decades.

"The designation decisions contravene the right to freedom of association of the individuals affected and more broadly have a chilling effect on human rights defenders and civic space. Any restrictions on the right to freedom of association must meet a strict test of necessity and proportionality," the high commissioner said.

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