

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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LA Jews for Peace Petitions President Biden To Demand that Israel Reverse Designating Six Human Rights Groups as Terrorist Organizations

LA Jews for Peace condemns the Israeli government military order designating six human rights groups active in the Occupied Palestinian West Bank as “terrorist organizations.” The designated groups include Al-Haq (founded in 1979 by Jonathan Kuttab and others), Addameer (prisoner rights), Defense for Children International-Palestine, the Bisan Center for Research and Development, the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees, and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees.

The Israeli government presented no evidence that any of these human rights groups engaged in terrorism. The only justification for the designation is that the Defense Ministry under Benny Gantz asserted the humanitarian groups “constitute a network of organizations active undercover on the international front on behalf of the Popular Front [for the Liberation of Palestine – PFLP];” they are “controlled by senior leaders” of the PFLP; and they are a “central source” of financing for the PFLP.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that the military order “effectively outlaws” the activities of the six groups. Israeli security forces are now authorized to close the groups’ offices, confiscate their assets, and arrest and jail their staff members. Funding or even publicly expressing support for their activities is also prohibited. Amnesty and HRW say the “appalling and unjust decision is an attack by the Israeli government on the international human rights movement.”

Israel defines itself as a Jewish state that is bound in part by Jewish law that includes a prohibition against bearing false witness.¹ Accusing human rights groups of being terrorist organizations without evidence, might be considered false witness in violation of a fundamental Torah commandment.

LA Jews for Peace condemns the Israeli government for this arbitrary action against six humanitarian NGOs that serve as a major route of aid for Palestinians who live under a military occupation that major human rights organizations identify as apartheid. **LA Jews for Peace** calls on President Biden to remind the Bennett – Lapid government that outlawing human rights organizations is the action of a dictatorship, not the democratic government that Israel aspires to be. Biden should demand that Israel reverse these designations.

¹ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor;” Exodus 20:19 and Deuteronomy 5:20.