

Statement from former al-Haq workers outside Palestine in response to the designation of six Palestinian human rights and civil society groups as “terrorist” 25 Oct 2021

We are former staffers of Al-Haq, the prominent Palestinian human rights organization founded in Ramallah in the occupied Palestinian territories in 1979. Collectively, our time with al-Haq spans decades. Some of us worked with the organisation in the 1980s and 1990s, including during the first intifada and through the Oslo years. Others came later, working with Al-Haq during the second intifada and beyond. Our experiences at Al-Haq helped form the professional and ethical bases on which we built our understanding of the place and the value of human rights and human dignity in the everyday struggle for justice. Working in Palestine with Al-Haq was a critically formative time for us, and we have carried these lessons to the roles we later played in different arenas and in different struggles. Across the region, and indeed internationally, Al-Haq is credited as an incubator for human rights activists and professionals, and for setting the gold standard in research and advocacy.

On 19 October, Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz formally designated Al-Haq as a “terrorist organization” under Israeli law, along with five other Palestinian human rights groups and civic organisations working in the West Bank: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Defense for Children International – Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committee and the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees. Israel’s bizarre and outrageous move was quickly and roundly condemned by Palestinian and international human rights groups around the world. PNGO (the Palestinian NGOs Network) and PHROC (the Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council) described Israel’s move as “a sinister, unprecedented, and blanket attack on Palestinian human rights defenders and civil society organizations.” We firmly reject the designation which, as Amnesty International noted, “effectively outlaws the activities of these civil society groups. It authorizes Israeli authorities to close their offices, seize their assets and arrest and jail their staff members, and it prohibits funding or even publicly expressing support for their activities.”

We are immensely proud of having worked with Al-Haq; we are proud to have been – and to continue to be – associated with the organization, and we are proud here to express support for its ongoing work in defence of the human rights of the Palestinian people. We stand in solidarity with Al-Haq, and with the five other Palestinian organizations similarly designated as “terrorist” by Minister Gantz. We expect our governments to take the necessary measures to ensure that Israel immediately rescinds its designation and does nothing to impede the continuation of these organizations’ human rights activities in defence of the rights of the Palestinian people.

Signatures (in personal capacity)

Maha Abdullah	International/EU Advocacy Officer, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
Prof. Alessandra Annoni	Associate Professor of International Law, University of Ferrara, Italy
Dr Valentina Azarova	Manchester International Law Centre, University of Manchester; Global Legal Action Network (GLAN).
Fateh Azzam	Former Middle East Regional Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; former founding director, Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, American University of Beirut. USA.
Linda Bevis	Former international and immigration attorney UN Human Rights Award – Seattle Chapter. North Seattle College professor. Palestine Teaching Trunk creator. USA.
Grazia Careccia	Manager, Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre. UK.
Pearce Clancy	PhD scholar, Institute for Human Rights, National University of Ireland Galway.
Prof Matthew Craven	Professor of International Law. SOAS, University of London.
Dr Anthony Cullen	Senior Lecturer in Law, School of Law, Middlesex University, London.
Dr Aoife Daly	Lecturer, School of Law, University College Cork.
Prof Shane Darcy	Irish Centre for Human Rights, School of Law, National University of Ireland Galway
Jennifer DePiazza	former UN ICTY and Special Tribunal for Lebanon, The Netherlands.
Stijn Denayer	former legal researcher at al-Haq. Sydney
Judith Dueck (retired)	Former Director of Research, Content and Scholarship, Canadian Museum for Human Rights.
Angela Gaff	London
Prof Frances Hasso	Duke University, North Carolina
Roger Heacock	Professor of History, Birzeit University
Timothy Hillier	former legal researcher at al-Haq
Dr Joost Hiltermann	Program Director Middle East and North Africa, International Crisis Group. Brussels.

Elisabeth Koek	Danish Refugee Council, Nairobi office
Niell Kirrane	Former advocacy adviser at al-Haq. Brussels.
Nada Kiswanson	Legal counsel and consultant. The Hague.
Mike Merryman-Lotze	Middle East Program Director, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Philadelphia, PA.
Mercedes Melon	Senior lawyer with Open Society Justice Initiative. UK/Spain
Russell Mokhiber	Editor, Corporate Crime Reporter. Washington DC.
Lisa Monaghan	former al-Haq intern and former Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
Rania Muhareb	Irish Research Council and Hardiman PhD Scholar, Irish Centre for Human Rights, School of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway. Al-Shabaka Policy member.
Prof Ray Murphy	Irish Centre for Human Rights, School of Law, National University of Ireland Galway.
Taran Nadler	Multnomah County Adult Protection Services, USA
Claudia Nicoletti	Human Rights Consultant. Italy.
Joan Nolan	former legal research intern at al-Haq. Ireland.
Joanna Oyediran	former Senior Human Rights Officer, UNAMID and UNMIS and Researcher, Amnesty International, International Secretariat, UK,
Tom Palmer	former Programme Officer. UK
Emma Playfair OBE	Former Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa, The Ford Foundation.
Freya Putt	former al-Haq researcher. Canada.
Mouin Rabbani	Jadaliyya. The Hague.
Dr John Reynolds	Associate Professor of Law, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.
Mervat Rishmawi	Human rights consultant. UK.
Marty Rosenbluth	Immigration Attorney, Vice Chair of the International Refugee Law Committee; ABA International Law Section; Co-Chair of the Rights of Immigrants Committee; ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice
Jacqueline Shahinian	former Paralegal at Al-Haq. Geneva, Switzerland

Roberto Stefani	Program Officer, Extractive Industries Global Program, Oxfam, Mexico.
Marc Stephens	former legal researcher at Al-Haq. UK.
Nils Steven	Policy Advisor climate justice - Action Aid Netherlands. Formerly EU Advocacy Officer at al-Haq.
Alessandro Tonutti	former Italian Development Cooperation in Jerusalem. Italy.
Peter Trainor	former al-Haq intern. Registered Social Worker, Toronto.
Frank Wall	former legal researcher at al-Haq. Ireland
Prof Lynn Welchman	Professor of Law in the Middle East and North Africa. SOAS, University of London
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