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Crackdown on Palestinian civil society: Union of Agricultural Work Committees raided [EN/AR]

News and Press Release

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MEDIA STATEMENT

UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory
Ramallah
3 December 2025

Crackdown on Palestinian civil society: Union of Agricultural Work Committees raided

On Monday, 1 December, Israeli security forces raided and vandalised the offices of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), a Palestinian non-governmental organisation, in Ramallah and Hebron. This comes amidst an escalating Israeli targeting of Palestinian civil society and human rights defenders, most recently in the context of the olive harvest season.

UAWC is one of six leading Palestinian civil society organisations designated as "terrorist" by Israeli authorities in 2021 based on an Israeli legislation that has vague and broad definitions of terrorism and terrorist organisations, which not only risks but has demonstrably led to unjustifiable restrictions on human rights. To date, no evidence was provided to substantiate the accusations. Licensed under Palestinian law, UAWC has long provided support to Palestinian rural communities and Palestinian farmers facing settler violence and the risk of forced displacement. The attack on UAWC followed weeks of harassment and public incitement by Israeli settlers and leaders of settler groups, particularly citing UAWC's work during the olive harvest season.

This year's olive harvest season is the most violent on record, with 167 settler attacks affecting 87 Palestinian communities recorded as of 12 November. Increasingly, attacks by settlers and Israeli security forces targeted not only farmers, but also human rights defenders and organisations supporting them against settler violence. Since 1 October, the UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has recorded 81 violations by Israeli security forces and/or settlers against human rights defenders, protective presence activists and NGOs supporting Palestinians against settler violence and settlement expansion, including 48 cases of arrest and detention and 22 acts of physical assault.

Unnecessary or disproportionate use of force, arbitrary detention, and torture or other forms of ill-treatment are permanent features in the conduct of Israeli security forces against Palestinians and Palestinian activists. During the raid, Israeli security forces reportedly kept the people who were present at UAWC premises blindfolded and handcuffed, kneeling down, or with their faces down on the floor for several hours and detained eight men.

The conduct of Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is massively shrinking both the physical and the civic space available to

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The conduct of Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is massively shrinking both the physical and the civic space available to Palestinians, while Israel continues to advance its unlawful annexation of the occupied West Bank.

“The legal way forward is clear: Israel must end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and remove all settlers in accordance with the conclusions of the International Court of Justice,” said Ajith Sunghay, the Head of the UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. “In the meantime, Israel is an occupying power with extensive duties under international law, including respecting, protecting and ensuring the fulfilment of Palestinians’ human rights, such as the rights to earn a living, and to freedom of expression and association.”

ENDS

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