



Comité pour une
PAIX JUSTE
au Proche-Orient

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Luxembourg, Sunday Jan 16th, 2022

To the Dutch Foreign Ministry (MENA Department)

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

We, at the European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP), a coalition of 42 organisations from 20 European countries, are shocked and, frankly, appalled by the recent Dutch Government decision to cut off the subventions to the Union of Agricultural Work Committees – one of the key Palestinian civil society organisations.

The Israeli government has continued to intensify its attacks on independent Palestinian civil society organisations and their staff, who regularly face smear campaigns, spurious accusations of links to terrorism as well as threats and intimidation, travel bans and movement restrictions, and arrest for their work. The persecution of organisations and individuals, by depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms, because they OPPOSE APARTHEID and work to expose Israel's war crimes, international law violations and human rights abuses is one of the key methods used by Israel to maintain its domination and oppression over the Palestinian people.

It is deeply worrying and shocking that the Dutch Government, despite its history of supporting organisations issuing from oppressed people, decided to take the side of the oppressor. In contradiction to the clarifying conclusions of an external investigation ordered by the Dutch Government, which found no organisational or financial links between the UAWC and terrorism, it instead decided to end its support based on alleged 'individual links' of board and staff members of UAWC with a Palestinian political party, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

This approach contradicts EU's decision and spirit of reassurances the European Union has provided to Palestinian civil society, when clarifying in March 2020 that it "does not ask any civil society organization ... to discriminate against any natural person based on his/her political affiliation".

Indeed, by unilaterally and arbitrarily applying this new 'conditionality', it appears that the Dutch government is attempting to police the private and political lives of Palestinian workers; this can only be seen as helping to enforce Israel's colonial rule over all aspects of Palestinian life.

Considering the above we call upon the Dutch government to reverse its regrettable decision and publicly show support for UAWC and other Palestinian civil society organisations under attack by the Israeli state and its international advocacy groups.

Yours sincerely,

Michel Legrand



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