

Israel's New INGO Registration Measures Are a Grave Threat to Humanitarian Operations and International Law – 55 Organisations Say (6 May 2025)

The undersigned 55 organisations operating in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) call for urgent action from the international community against new Israeli registration rules for international NGOs. Based on vague, broad, politicised, and open-ended criteria, these rules appear designed to assert control over independent humanitarian, development and peacebuilding operations, silence advocacy grounded in international humanitarian and human rights law, and further entrench Israeli control and *de facto* annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory.

For over a year and a half, humanitarian organisations have continued operating despite unprecedented constraints. In 2024, they reached millions of people across the oPt with essential services – from food and water to mobile clinics, legal aid, and education. The new registration rules now threaten to shut this work down. These measures go beyond routine policy. They mark a serious escalation in restrictions on humanitarian and civic space and risk setting a dangerous precedent.

Under the new provisions, INGOs already registered in Israel may face de-registration, while new applicants risk rejection based on arbitrary, politicised allegations, such as “delegitimising Israel” or expressing support for accountability for Israeli violations of international law. Other disqualifiers include public support for a boycott of Israel within the past seven years (by staff, a partner, board member, or founder) or failure to meet exhaustive reporting requirements. By framing humanitarian and human rights advocacy as a threat to the state, Israeli authorities can shut out organisations merely for speaking out about conditions they witness on the ground, forcing INGOs to choose between delivering aid and promoting respect for the protections owed to affected people.

INGOs are further required to submit complete staff lists and other sensitive information about staff and their families to Israel when applying for registration. In a context where humanitarian and healthcare workers are routinely subject to harassment, detention, and direct attacks, this raises serious protection concerns.

These new rules are part of a broader, long-term crackdown on humanitarian and civic space, marked by heightened surveillance and attacks, and a series of actions that restrict humanitarian access, compromise staff safety, and undermine core principles of humanitarian action. They are not isolated but part of a wider pattern that includes:

- Blocking or delaying aid through arbitrary bureaucratic restrictions, logistical obstacles, and complete sieges, denying essential lifesaving supplies to Palestinians.
- Killing more than 400 humanitarian workers in Gaza, injuring and detaining countless others, and repeatedly attacking marked and notified humanitarian premises, facilities or convoys.
- Passing legislation aimed at curtailing the operations of UNRWA, the largest provider of essential services for Palestinians.
- Advancing legislation to impose a tax of up to 80 per cent on foreign government funding to Israeli NGOs, while barring them from seeking recourse through the Israeli court system – including organisations that serve as partners for INGOs to deliver assistance and uphold protections in communities facing displacement, demolitions, or settler violence.
- Suspending work visas for international staff and revoking permits for Palestinians residing in the West Bank to access Jerusalem, severely disrupting operations.

- And now, making INGO registration conditional on political and ideological alignment, undermining the neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian actors.

Under international humanitarian law, occupying powers are obligated to facilitate impartial humanitarian assistance and ensure the welfare of the protected population. Any attempt to condition humanitarian access on political alignment or penalise organisations for fulfilling their mandate risks breaching this framework. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to allow unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza in three legally binding provisional measures orders in 2024. Yet, these new rules expand and institutionalise existing barriers to aid.

We call on States, donors, and the international community to:

- **Use all possible means to protect humanitarian operations** from measures that compromise neutrality, independence, and access – including staff list requirements, political vetting, and vague revocation clauses.
- **Take concrete political and diplomatic action** beyond statements of concern to ensure unhindered humanitarian access and prevent the erosion of principled aid delivery.
- **Support INGOs and Palestinian and Israeli civil society organisations** through legal assistance, diplomatic support, and flexible funding to help mitigate legal, financial, and reputational risks. Donors must defend principled humanitarian and human rights work.

The undersigned 55 organisations stress that engagement with the registration process to preserve critical humanitarian operations should not be misinterpreted as endorsement of these measures.

These 55 organisations remain committed to the delivery of humanitarian aid, along with development and peacebuilding services and activities that are independent, impartial, and based on need, in full accordance with international law and the humanitarian principles derived from it. INGOs stand ready to engage with Israeli authorities in good faith on administrative processes but cannot accept measures that penalise principled humanitarian work or expose staff to retaliation. These measures not only undermine assistance in the oPt but also set a dangerous precedent for humanitarian operations globally.

Signatories

1. Act Church of Sweden
2. ActionAid
3. Alianza / ActionAid Spain (ApS/AAS)
4. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
5. Anera
6. Asamblea de Cooperación Por la Paz (ACPP)
7. Asociación Paz con Dignidad
8. CARE International
9. CESVI
10. Children Not Numbers
11. Christian Aid
12. CIDSE – International family of Catholic social justice organisations
13. Cooperazione Internazionale Sud Sud (CISS)
14. COSPE
15. DanChurchAid (DCA)
16. Danish House in Palestine
17. Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre
18. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
19. forumZFD
20. Global Communities
21. HEKS/EPER
22. Humanity First UK
23. Humanity & Inclusion – Handicap International
24. IM Swedish Development Partner
25. International Media Support (IMS)
26. Islamic Relief Worldwide
27. Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)
28. KURVE Wustrow
29. MedGlobal
30. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
31. Médecins du Monde (MdM) France
32. Médecins du Monde (MdM) Spain
33. Médecins du Monde (MdM) Switzerland
34. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
35. medico international
36. Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)
37. Movement for Peace (MPDL)
38. Muslim Aid
39. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)
40. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
41. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
42. Oxfam
43. Pax Christi International
44. Plan International
45. Polish Medical Mission Association (PMM)
46. Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)
47. Relief International (RI)
48. Save the Children International (SCI)
49. Secours Islamique France (SIF)
50. Terre des Hommes (Tdh) Italia
51. Terre des Hommes (Tdh) Lausanne
52. The Center for Mind-Body Medicine
53. War Child
54. Weltfriedensdienst e.V. (world peace service)
55. West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC)