November 18, 2021

Some Members of the Jewish Community of Portland, Oregon

Oregon Delegation
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On October 19 Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz summarily declared(1) six West Bank Palestinian non-governmental organizations to be terrorist organizations, claiming that they operate as a network of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The organizations include Defense for Children International - Palestine and Al-Haq, the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists - Geneva and the winner of many international human rights awards. This massive attack on Palestinian human rights defenders and the communities they represent opens the door to much harsher sanctions against them and undermines the public’s right to information about the realities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Israel acted with no due process and no public presentation of evidence, while there is considerable evidence(2) to refute the charges of terrorist affiliations.

Progressive members of Congress, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, J Street, T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, Reconstructing Judaism, and the Israeli daily Haaretz all condemned Israel’s action.(3) A joint statement by many Israeli human rights and political organizations (Adalah, Akevot, Association for Civil Rights in Israel, B’Tselem, Bimkom, Breaking the Silence, Combatants for Peace, Emek Shaveh, Gisha, Hamoked, Haqel, Ir Amim, Kav La’Oved, Kerem Navot, Machsom Watch, Mothers Against Violence, Peace Now, Physicians for Human Rights – Israel, Public Committee Against Torture, Rabbis for Human Rights, Yesh Din, Zazim) denounced this “draconian measure” as “characteristic of repressive authoritarian regimes.”(4) We recognize and affirm the courageous work of these and other peace and justice organizations who refuse to accept the narrative that Palestinians and Israelis cannot trust each other.
The Biden administration has publicly done no more than request “more information” (5) from Israel. So, we are calling on you, our congressional representatives, to speak out more boldly. Rep. Betty McCollum and co-sponsors Reps. Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Raúl Grijalva, Andre Carson, Ilhan Omar, Marie Newman, Ayanna Pressley, Jesús "Chuy" García and Cori Bush have introduced a resolution (6) calling on President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken to publicly condemn Israel’s “authoritarian and antidemocratic act of repression” and demanding that Israel “immediately end efforts aimed at persecuting, delegitimizing and criminalizing Palestinian human rights defenders and civil society organizations.” We urge you to become a co-sponsor of this House Resolution or to introduce a similar Senate Resolution.

As your Jewish constituents, we urge you not to stand idly by.

Rabbi Ariel Stone                      David Newman
Rabbi Benjamin Barnett                Lee Gordon
Rabbi Joey Wolf                       Ellen Metz
Oregon State Senator Michael Dembrow, SD23      Emma Lugo
Randolph Splitter                     Gabrielle Buvinger-Wild
Carol Landsman                        George Elie Makad
Joel Beinin                           Gerson Robboy
William Singer                       Gloria Halper
Melisa Crosby                         Harriet Cooke
John Blank                           Hent M. Werch
Alice Shapiro                        Jackie Brookman
Barbara Gundle                       James Ofsink
Betsy L. Zucker                      Jamie Meyers
Bill Resnick                         Jan DeWeese
Bob Brown                            Jeff Zucker
Carol Mazer                          Johanna Brenner
Cynthia Gilliam                      John Linder
David Eisen                          Judith Wild
David Lewis                          Judy Arielle Fiestal

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Stephen Auerbach
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Adam Segal


3. (continued)

https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/.premium-a-stain-upon-israel-1.10318621

4. https://twitter.com/btselem/status/1452558466598510604
