AMAN
Transparency Palestine

EU SEE
SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Country Focus Report
Palestine
2026



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. An Introduction to the Enabling Environment

B. Assessment of the Enabling Environment

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms
2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework
3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources
4. Open and Responsive State
5. Supportive Public Culture on Discourses on Civil Society
6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

C. Recommendations

D. Research Process



A) An Introduction to the Enabling Environment

What we understand by an Enabling Environment is the combination of laws, rules and social attitudes that support and promote the work of civil society. Within such an environment, civil society can engage in political and public life without fear of reprisals, openly express its views, and actively participate in shaping its context. This includes a supportive legal and regulatory framework for civil society, ensuring access to information and resources that are sustainable and flexible to pursue their goals unhindered, in safe physical and digital spaces. In an enabling environment, the state demonstrates openness and responsiveness in governance, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. Positive values, norms, attitudes, and practices towards civil society from state and non-state actors further underscore the supportive environment.

To capture the state of the Enabling Environment, we use the following six principles:



In this Country Focus Report, each enabling principle is assessed using a quantitative score ranging from 1 to 5 and is complemented by analysis and recommendations prepared by Palestine (AMAN Coalition for Integrity and Accountability - Transparency Palestine) based on input from an expert panel. Rather than offering a singular index to rank countries, the report aims to measure the enabling environment for civil society across the six principles, discerning dimensions of strength and those requiring attention.

The findings presented in this report are based on the diverse perspectives of civil society actors who convened as an expert panel in May 2026 to discuss and assess the state of the enabling environment for Palestinian civil society. Their collective contributions enrich the report with a realistic and participatory assessment. This primary approach is supported by secondary sources of information, which provide additional context and strengthen the analysis.

The Palestinian Context

Understanding Palestinian civic space necessarily requires an examination of the political and legal context within which state institutions and Palestinian civil society organisations operate. The Palestinian context is characterised by a unique set of circumstances that has resulted in a complex institutional and legal environment. This complexity arises from the political developments that have taken place in the West Bank (WB) and the Gaza Strip (GS). These developments began with the peace agreement signed between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the State of Israel, commonly known as the Oslo Accords. The essence of these accords was the gradual termination of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through the transfer of responsibilities and powers from the occupying power to a newly established Palestinian Authority, comprising legislative and executive branches. This transitional process was intended to last five years (1993–1998) and culminate in a final-status agreement between the two parties.

However, following the rise of the Likud Party in May 1996 and the formation of a government that opposed the Oslo Accords, the gradual transfer of powers was suspended through a series of developments, culminating in an official governmental decision to suspend the withdrawal on 8 September 1997. Subsequent diplomatic efforts to revive the peace process included the Camp David Summit in 2000, the Taba negotiations in 2001, the Arab Peace Initiative in 2002, the Roadmap in 2003, the Annapolis Conference in 2007, the Olmert–Abbas negotiations during 2007–2008, and the American initiative (the “Kerry initiative”) in 2013–2014. However, these efforts failed to revive the process, and the negotiations effectively collapsed in 2013 amid continued expansion of Israeli settlement, differences over the two-state solution, a lack of mutual trust, and internal political pressures on both sides. As a result, the occupying power retained control over approximately 70% of the territory of the West Bank. This situation remains largely unchanged, with Israel, as the occupying power, continuing to exercise extensive control over Palestinian territory, border crossings, natural resources, and the movement of people and goods.

An internal rupture took place within the Palestinian political sphere following the 2006 general elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, in which Hamas won a parliamentary majority and subsequently formed a government. Political disagreements between Hamas and Fatah over the formation of the new government, its political programme, and control over the security forces subsequently escalated into a conflict that resulted in Hamas taking control of the Gaza Strip, while the Palestinian Authority remained in control of the areas transferred to it by the occupying power. Although Hamas operates as the de facto authority in the Gaza

Strip, the legislation formally applicable in Gaza remains largely the same as that applicable in the West Bank.

This situation has resulted in multiple governing structures across the occupied Palestinian territory with different legal and administrative authorities and overlapping mandates. This institutional fragmentation has negatively affected the environment in which Palestinian civil society organisations operate.

Regarding East Jerusalem, Israel, as the occupying power, has unilaterally applied Israeli law to the city since 1980. This measure is considered unlawful under international law and has not been recognised by the international community. Accordingly, the Israeli authorities impose an Israeli legal and administrative system in East Jerusalem without incorporating its Palestinian population into the State of Israel – treating them as residents rather than as citizens. This has imposed additional restrictions on the ability of Palestinian institutions and civil society organisations to operate in the city.

In 2007, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) was suspended due to the internal political division. It was unable to convene or exercise its legislative and oversight functions. In 2018, the Council was formally dissolved by a decision of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Consequently, legislation has been adopted primarily through decree-laws issued by the President of the State of Palestine. This has generated considerable debate regarding the effectiveness of legislative oversight, the principle of a balanced separation of powers, and the level of democratic accountability.

For the purposes of this report, the term “Palestinian Authority” refers to the governing institutions that exercise their mandates in the West Bank, namely the Palestinian National Authority. The term “occupying power” refers to Israel in its capacity as the occupying power. When discussing developments relating specifically to the Gaza Strip, the report uses the terms “de facto authority” or “the governing authority in the Gaza Strip.”

Unless differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are explicitly and clearly identified, the findings and conclusions presented in this report concerning Palestine should be understood as applying to the occupied Palestinian territory as a whole.

Civil Society in Palestine

Palestinian civil society organisations have a long history of engagement in social, national and grassroots activism, dating back to the British Mandate period and expanding significantly following the Nakba in 1948 through charitable work and humanitarian assistance. Their role subsequently broadened to include the provision of essential public services, including education and health services, as well as support for marginalised groups, human rights advocacy, relief work, and research. Following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, civil society organisations continued to contribute to the development of Palestinian institutions and public policy. Some organisations also played an important role in promoting democratic governance, public freedoms, and rights – including through engagement in legislative processes. A prominent example was the development of the Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations , which was adopted following extensive engagement between civil society actors, members and committees of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and the Presidency.

The current political and institutional context has significantly affected the operating environment for Palestinian civil society. The continuation of the Israeli occupation, the ongoing political division, the absence of an effective Palestinian Legislative Council, and the suspension of presidential and legislative elections have weakened institutional checks and

balances and limited opportunities for civil society participation in public policy and decision-making. At the same time, the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip and the escalation of violence by Israeli settlers and Israeli military operations in the West Bank have further aggravated political, economic, and humanitarian conditions. In Gaza, the destruction of infrastructure, including the premises of civil society organisations, and the deterioration of humanitarian conditions have severely constrained the ability of organisations to operate, document violations, and provide essential services. These developments have also contributed to a broader deterioration of civic freedoms.

Civil society organisations across the occupied Palestinian territory also face significant challenges arising from restrictions and measures imposed by the Israeli authorities, including restrictions on civil society, legal proceedings, arrests, closures, and measures affecting their ability to operate. In February 2026, the Israeli Supreme Court issued an interim injunction suspending certain closure orders pending consideration of petitions, while in May 2026 the Court rejected a petition brought by international organisations concerning the security-screening framework. These developments have had implications for the continuity of humanitarian and civil society operations.

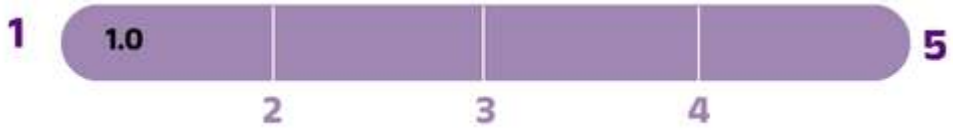
The broader legal and political context is also reflected in the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which addressed the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including settlement activity, land confiscation, demolitions, forced displacement, restrictions on movement and residence, exploitation of natural resources, violence, and discriminatory legislation and measures. Against this backdrop, this report assesses the enabling environment for civil society in Palestine, focusing on key developments during 2025–2026 while referring, where relevant, to earlier developments that continue to shape the environment in which Palestinian civil society operates.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

PRINCIPLE SCORE

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms

Score: 1/5 (Fully Disabling) [1]



In its 2025 rating, the CIVICUS Monitor classified Palestine's civic space as "closed". In accordance with the CFR methodology, this classification places Palestine within the fully disabling category for the principle concerning respect for and protection of fundamental civic freedoms. This assessment reflects the severe and cumulative restrictions imposed on civic freedoms by the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank, the de facto authorities in the Gaza Strip, and Israel as the occupying power.

At the formal legal level, The Amended Palestinian Basic Law of 2003 clearly and explicitly regulates the principle of respect for and protection of fundamental civic freedoms. Chapter Two of the Basic Law, entitled "Public Rights and Freedoms", addresses a range of fundamental rights and freedoms that the Palestinian National Authority is obligated to uphold. Among the most important are the protection of human rights (Article 10), freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19), freedom of association (Article 26), and the rights and freedoms of the media (Article 27).

However, in practice, a number of decree-laws, legislative measures, and official practices have enabled the authorities to narrow the application of these legal provisions. These measures have affected multiple areas, including restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, obtaining licenses to establish or conduct civil society work, and freedom of the press. As a result, Palestinian civil society organisations have faced numerous obstacles – imposed by the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank,

[1] *This is a rebased score derived from the CIVICUS Monitor rating published in December 2025.*

the Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip, and Israel as the occupying power – through a range of measures that have restricted their activities.

Thus, while fundamental freedoms are formally recognised and protected by law in Palestine, many aspects concerning their regulation and implementation have been deferred for later legislation, rather than being guaranteed directly within constitutional protections. In practice, the exercise of these freedoms remains inconsistent across both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, constrained further by the restrictive measures imposed by Israel as the occupying power.

1.1 Freedom of Association

Freedom of association is guaranteed under Article (26), Paragraph 2 of the Amended Palestinian Basic Law of 2003, which states: "…they shall have, in particular, the following rights: to form trade unions, associations, unions, leagues, clubs, and popular institutions in accordance with the law". In addition, Article (1) of the Charitable Associations and Community Organisations Law No. (1) of 2000 stipulates that: "Palestinians shall have the right to freely practice social, cultural, professional, and scientific activities, including the right to establish and manage associations and community organisations in accordance with the provisions of this law." However, in practice, restrictive conditions limit the environment in which civil society operates – particularly the exercise of freedom of association by individuals perceived as political opponents. Despite the protections provided under the Palestinian Basic Law – particularly Article (26) – and the Associations Law No. (1) of 2000, political opponents experience restrictions to their right to associate. In Gaza, for example, Amnesty International has documented that individuals have experienced threats, intimidation and harassment – including interrogation by security forces affiliated with the de facto authority, Hamas – solely for exercising their right to peaceful protest, and has called on the authorities to respect the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression and to end the repression of protesters.

Attempts by hardline actors – particularly those representing security bodies – to restrict the work of civil society organisations through legislative amendments have largely failed. However, restrictions have persisted through the securitised handling of NGO affairs by registration authorities – notably the Ministry of Interior as documented by PCHR. This has included interference in the internal affairs of organisations through rejecting or obstructing registration applications, delaying procedures related to the approval of boards of directors, and freezing the bank accounts of organisations whose boards have not yet been approved by the Ministry of Interior, even when these organisations were registered by court order. All of these measures have hindered the work and role of civil society organisations.

In the Gaza Strip, registration procedures continue to fall under the authority of the Gaza Ministry of Interior, even when organisations are already registered in the West Bank, or vice versa. This obstructs opening accounts with Palestinian banks for the purpose of receiving donations. At the same time, Palestinian banks grant themselves discretionary authority to decide whether or not to open accounts for registered organisations without providing justification. For example, the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN) received a complaint from a charitable organisation operating in Gaza because a bank had denied its request to open an account without explanation. This constitutes a restriction on civic space and undermines the ability of civil society organisations to fulfil their mission and implement their programmes and activities.

Requiring individuals wishing to establish an organisation or join a board of directors to obtain a security clearance certificate from the security forces has made political affiliation or factional loyalty a determining factor in whether individuals can exercise their right to participate in the

establishment or management of civil society organisations. This requirement has been imposed on numerous civil society organisations in the Gaza Strip.

Civil society organisations in the Gaza Strip have also faced harassment from the de facto authorities governing the Strip. The Independent Commission for Human Rights has documented incidents in which armed groups affiliated with the Hamas authorities have raided the premises of civil society organisations. For example, in October 2025, an armed group seized control of the headquarters of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), preventing employees, patients, and board members from entering the property at gunpoint.

In addition, the sector continues to face challenges arising from the ongoing genocidal war in the Gaza Strip, including direct and indirect bombardment targeting the headquarters and facilities of civil society organisations by the occupying power (the Israeli army). These attacks have resulted in the destruction of offices, loss of assets, looting of equipment, and targeting of organisations because of their human rights positions. This has led to the suspension or freezing of funding and increased risks for staff members, negatively affecting organisations' ability to operate safely and sustainably in the field.

1.2 Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

In Palestine, public assemblies are regulated by Public Meetings Law No. (12) of 1998. Article (2) stipulates: "Citizens shall have the right to hold public meetings, seminars, and processions freely, and such rights may not be infringed upon or restricted except in accordance with the controls stipulated in this law."

Contrary to the law itself, however, the Executive Regulation of the Public Meetings Law issued by the Minister of Interior in 2000 imposes certain restrictions on the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly, particularly with regard to notification procedures and requirements, the determination of timeframes, and specification of the purpose and location of meetings. The regulation remains in force in the West Bank. It also grants the police director the authority to respond to notifications about meetings and to investigate the purpose of the gathering. However, the law itself does not require prior approval to hold an assembly. Organisers are required to submit written notification to the governor or police director at least 48 hours before the public meeting or march; the governor or police director may impose restrictions on the duration or route of the meeting for traffic management purposes. Under the 2000 Executive Regulation, the police director has a broader administrative role, including requesting a meeting with organisers to discuss the purpose and subject matter of the gathering, assessing whether its purpose is consistent with the law and public order, imposing security conditions and other requirements, and issuing permits. While no case of denial was documented during the period September 2025 to May 2026, this broader administrative role reflects an expansion of the restrictions imposed on peaceful assemblies and freedom of expression and continues to present an obstacle to the exercise of this right.

Although the Amended Palestinian Basic Law guarantees citizens a range of rights and freedoms, shortcomings remain evident in their implementation, resulting in a gap between legal provisions and their actual application. The repression of freedom of assembly by authorities through various security and administrative measures has obstructed social movements, limited opportunities for collective expression, reduced safe public participation, and weakened citizens' willingness to engage in social and trade union activities due to fear of prosecution or punishment.

1.3 Freedom of Expression

Article (19) of the Basic Law stipulates that: “There shall be no infringement upon freedom of opinion, and every person shall have the right to express and disseminate their opinion verbally, in writing, or through any other means of expression…” However, Decree-Law No. (10) of 2018 on Cybercrime and its amendments introduces additional restrictions that limit freedom of publication and hinder Palestinian civil society organisations’ ability to communicate with the public.

This demonstrates that the Palestinian Authority continues to impose restrictive legislation. On the grounds of this decree-law, the security forces were granted broad powers to restrict freedom of opinion and expression, as well as expanded powers for conducting investigations.

In one instance, a complaint was filed by the Head of the President’s Office against employees of the AMAN; this was perceived by AMAN as being part of a sustained effort to suppress the voices of rights defenders, anti-corruption advocates, and activists in civic and media spaces. During the case it was revealed that influential parties had attempted to interfere politically with the work of the Public Prosecution. Instead of disclosing the outcome of four years of investigations into the alleged laundering of settlement dates, and instead of opening an investigation in response to allegations made by the AMAN Coalition of extortion and abuse of public office, the Head of the Presidential Office requested that the Public Prosecution prosecute the whistleblowers. In a complaint submitted by Ms. Intisar Abu Amara, Chief of Staff, at the President’s Office, through the Public Prosecution, reference was made to AMAN’s 2022 annual report, which included allegations concerning the involvement of officials at the President’s Office in the purchase of a private company from an individual facing charges related to trading in settlement dates, as well as other accusations still under investigation by the judiciary and the Public Prosecution.

Dr. Azmi Al-Shuaibi, Advisor to the Board of Directors of AMAN for Anti-Corruption Affairs, and Mr. Issam Haj Hussein, the Coalition’s Executive Director, were summoned to appear before the Public Prosecution in a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Abdul Qader Al-Husseini, on 5 June 2023. The following day, the case was referred to the Magistrate’s Court in Ramallah. This happened because they had reported the abuse of authority for private purposes by officials at the President’s Office. This case illustrates the practical constraints that anti-corruption activists and civil society actors may face when reporting the corruption or other abuses of authority.

In terms of the rights of journalists and media outlets, in 2025 the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) documented 897 violations of the freedom of the press, a decrease from 954 in 2024. The large majority of the violations were committed by Israel (831), with others committed by a range of Palestinian actors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (51), social media platforms (9), and other actors (6).

According to the monthly reports of the Independent Commission for Human Rights (Ombudsman Office), in 2025 approximately 596 violations affecting human rights and freedoms were documented in Palestine. These included cases of unnatural death, complaints related to torture and ill-treatment, violations of due process rights, detention ordered by governors, violations of freedom of opinion and expression and peaceful assembly, delays or failures in the implementation of judicial rulings, assaults on public property and individuals, and administrative detention.

In the West Bank, the Palestinian National Authority ordered the closure of the offices of Al-Jazeera Media Network, accusing the channel of broadcasting “inciting material” and

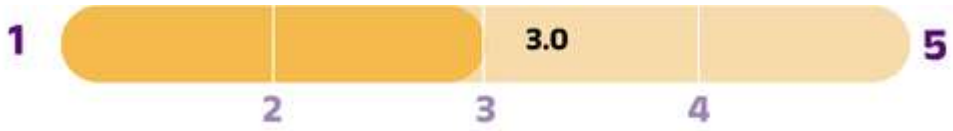
“interfering in Palestinian internal affairs”. The decision, issued jointly by the Ministries of Interior, Culture, and Communications, suspended the work of the channel’s staff and correspondents in the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority justified the decision by claiming that Al-Jazeera’s coverage of the security operation carried out by Palestinian security forces in Jenin Camp against wanted militants had “fueled tensions” and presented an inaccurate narrative of events. At the same time, Israel, as the occupying power, imposed similar restrictions on Al-Jazeera by ordering the closure of its office in the occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel also continued its policy of restricting Palestinian and international journalists, imposing unjustified limitations on their work in the West Bank. It enacted legislation granting Israeli authorities the power to shut down foreign media outlets they considered to be a threat to national security. Subsequently, military orders were issued to close Al-Jazeera’s offices in the city of Ramallah in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and block its broadcasts.

In the Gaza Strip, journalists and media institutions have faced extremely dangerous conditions since October 2023, directly affecting their ability to carry out their work and transmit information. Journalists and media institutions were prevented from entering Gaza to cover events. Israel also pursued policies of arrest and killing, targeting journalists, their families, and their homes and placing journalists under administrative detention without charge or trial. According to the 2025 report issued by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the Gaza Strip was the deadliest place in the world for journalists during 2025; approximately 43% of journalists killed globally that year died in Gaza under Israeli army fire. According to figures from the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate reported by WAFA on 26 September 2026, 262 Palestinian journalists and media workers had been killed since 7 October 2023, including 261 in Gaza and one in the West Bank. Separately, a statement issued by the SHAMS human rights centre on 3 May 2026 reported that more than 550 journalists had been injured and more than 150 media offices and premises destroyed.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework

Score: 3/5



2.1 Registration

Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations regulates the work of civil society organisations in terms of registration and licensing requirements, funding mechanisms, financial and administrative oversight, and institutional relations with the government. The law requires civil society organisations to register with the Ministry of Interior. Organisations must submit an application demonstrating that they meet the relevant requirements to the competent department of the Ministry. The Minister of Interior is required to make a determination within two months; if no decision is issued within this period, the organisation is deemed registered by law. If the Minister rejects the application, reasons must be provided and the organisation may appeal the decision in court within 30 days of receiving notification of the rejection in writing.

Security-related procedures form part of the administrative framework governing civil society organisations. According to ICNL, administrative measures adopted in 2007 introduced security agency involvement in registration procedures, raising concerns about their compatibility with the law governing organisations. In AMAN's report on a hearing published on 11 June 2026, Al-Haq's legal adviser also raised concerns about practices associated with security clearance. Separately, participants highlighted administrative approval requirements affecting the activation and continued operation of bank accounts, as well as delays or refusals in receiving bank transfers without clear explanations. These banking obstacles were reported to disrupt organisations' activities and payments.

As described by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), the Ministry of Interior has also imposed complex documentation and procedural requirements that organisations must fulfil to qualify for registration – including the tax clearance documents of all founders, financial stamps, and notarised papers. Meeting these requirements may be particularly

difficult for groups with limited funds, administrative capacity or access to legal support. ICNL also reports that some officials refer applications to security agencies to run a security clearance similar to a background check of board members of the applying organisation, in contravention of the law. This can further delay the registration process. Some organisations, particularly those involving individuals who support Hamas, are more targeted than others.

The security clearance requirement has become a tool for controlling resources, opportunities, and the granting of licenses and registration for civil society organisations. It has expanded the discretionary authority of the security forces, despite Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations clearly prohibiting the restriction of civil rights through the use of security clearance requirements. This highlights a fundamental contradiction between the provisions of the law and actual practice. A case described by AMAN in 2025 illustrates how the "security clearance" requirement has been used in practice to restrict access to rights and public services. The study documents how this was used in the registration of civil society organisations, highlighting how the involvement of security agencies in administrative procedures can obstruct rights guaranteed by law.

Administrative practice does not always reflect the registration safeguards established by law. Under Article 4 of Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations, an organisation is deemed registered if the Ministry of Interior does not issue a decision within two months. Where additional information or missing documents are submitted to complete the application, the two-month period runs from their submission. However, ICNL reports that the Ministry has sometimes refused to recognise organisations registered by default. Without a registration certificate, these organisations cannot open bank accounts to receive funds, limiting their ability to operate despite their legal registration status. ICNL also reports that administrative measures adopted in 2007 introduced security agency involvement in registration procedures, raising concerns about their compatibility with the law.

On 11 June 2026, AMAN reported on a hearing involving Ministry of Interior representatives, civil society organisations and other stakeholders from the West Bank and Gaza. The Ministry reported receiving 114 registration applications and registering 100 organisations in 2025. From the beginning of 2026 to the hearing, it had received 71 applications, of which 54 had resulted in registration. It explained that outstanding cases generally involved procedural requirements being completed in subsequent years, rather than final rejection. Discussions addressed registration and renewal procedures, administrative delays and banking restrictions affecting organisations' activities. The Ministry also reported introducing exceptional measures in 2024, including extending board terms and deferring financial and administrative reporting requirements, with a gradual return to standard procedures beginning in March 2026.

The Implementing Regulations of the Associations Law also set out specific grounds for refusing registration. Under the Administrative Courts Law, the Administrative Court has jurisdiction over appeals to final administrative decisions issued by public-law bodies, including decisions concerning organisations. Proceedings before the Administrative Court are public, and judgments must state their reasons and ruling. Final judgments of the Administrative Court may be appealed before the Administrative High Court within 30 days.

Israel, as the occupying power, also implements policies that obstruct the registration of Palestinian civil society organisations operating in the areas of the occupied Palestinian territory under its jurisdiction since the transitional period began in 1994. According to ICNL, in late 2024 and during 2025 the occupying power introduced new registration and accreditation procedures for international and local NGOs operating in the occupied Palestinian territory. These procedures require organisations to provide detailed information about staff members, donors, and partners, undergo security screening, and introduce broad

grounds for the rejection or cancellation of registration. In January 2026, Israel refused to renew the accreditation of dozens of international NGOs that refused to comply with the new framework, effectively preventing them from operating in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

2.2 Operational Environment

Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations recognises organisations' right to manage their affairs and conduct activities in accordance with the law. Article 5 requires their bylaws to specify their objectives and organisational structure, while Articles 18 and 23 assign management and policymaking responsibilities to their boards and general assemblies. Article 12 requires organisations to notify the competent department of changes to their bylaws, objectives or board membership within one month.

Article 13 of Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations requires organisations governed by the law to submit two reports, approved by their general assembly, to the competent ministry within four months of the end of the financial year. The annual activity report must provide a complete account of the organisation's activities during the preceding year. The financial report must detail all revenues and expenditure in accordance with applicable accounting principles and be certified by a licensed auditor.

The law also regulates inspections and interventions by the Ministry. This includes verifying that an organisation has spent its funds for the purpose for which it was established, as defined in its bylaws. Article (41) sets out safeguards protecting organisations, stating that "the funds of any association or organisation may not be seized, nor may its headquarters, centers, or branches be closed or searched, except pursuant to a decision issued by a competent judicial authority." Thus, the law itself does not present an obstacle in this regard.

Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations recognises the freedom to undertake social, cultural, professional and scientific activities, but does not expressly establish a specific right to participate in public policy debates. Organisations governed by the law may receive unconditional assistance for their work, subject to its provisions (Article 32), although this article does not distinguish between domestic and foreign sources. They may also merge, form unions or dissolve voluntarily in accordance with the prescribed procedures (Articles 23, 26, 27 and 37). Article 28 permits membership of Arab, regional or international organisations or unions outside Palestine, subject to notification of the competent authority. Article 34 allows foreign non-governmental organisations to apply to the Ministry of Interior to register branches in Palestine. For public fundraising, Article 33 requires organisations to notify the competent ministry before collecting donations for the social purposes for which they were established; it does not itself require prior ministerial approval. Any additional permit requirements arising under subsequent regulations must be identified separately.

The law also provides a shared statutory framework for organisations in the West Bank and Gaza, although administrative practices differ. Article 6 authorises the competent ministry to examine an organisation's activities and expenditure through a reasoned written decision, to verify compliance with the law and its bylaws. This oversight power does not, by itself, establish improper interference. However, ICNL reports restrictions on organisations operating across the two territories: despite Article 15 permitting branches within Palestine, organisations registered in the West Bank have reportedly been prevented from operating in Gaza, and vice versa.

Security clearance and administrative approvals raise related but distinct concerns. AMAN's 2025 study describes the use of security clearance in institutional licensing and broader concerns about political discrimination. In its article published on 11 June 2026, AMAN separately reports concerns about security clearance practices, approval procedures for governing bodies and authorised bank signatories, and restrictions affecting bank accounts and transfers.

Funding requirements differ according to an organisation's legal form and the applicable legislation. Organisations registered under Law No. (1) of 2000 on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations are distinct from non-profit companies registered with the Ministry of National Economy. Article 32 of the 2000 law permits organisations governed by it to receive unconditional assistance for their work, subject to the law's provisions, without expressly requiring prior approval for foreign funding. Public fundraising is a separate matter: Article 33 requires notification of the competent ministry, while ICNL reports that Regulation No. (26) of 2022 subsequently introduced prior authorisation requirements for donation collection.

Non-profit companies are governed by Regulation No. (20) of 2022, as amended by Regulation No. (14) of 2025. The Council of Ministers issued the amendment on 30 September 2025; it was published on 27 November 2025 and took effect 30 days after publication. The amended Article 13 requires companies to apply through the Companies Registrar for prior approval to receive gifts, donations, grants, funding and assistance. Approval is granted by the Minister of National Economy, on the Registrar's recommendation, where total annual funding does not exceed US$500,000 or its equivalent. Where that total exceeds the threshold, the Minister refers the application, together with a recommendation, to the Council of Ministers for a decision. The threshold therefore concerns total annual funding, rather than the value of an individual foreign funding request.

Separately, ICNL reports that Israeli authorities have introduced registration and accreditation requirements affecting international and local organisations operating in the occupied Palestinian territory, including disclosure of information about staff, donors and partners, and security screening. ICNL records concerns that these measures restrict civic space and hinder humanitarian and human rights work.

2.3 Protection from Interference

The legal framework provides protection against the arbitrary dissolution of civil society organisations. Article 37 of the Charitable Associations and Community Organisations Law No. (1) of 2000 sets out the grounds on which an organisation may be dissolved, namely: by a decision of its General Assembly; if it fails to commence its actual activities within the first year following its registration, unless such inactivity is caused by force majeure circumstances beyond the control of the organisation; or if it is found to have committed a substantial violation of its bylaws and fails to rectify the violation within a period not exceeding three months from the date of receiving a written warning from the Minister or the competent department.

The grounds for dissolution are clearly defined in the law, as are the mechanisms for challenging dissolution decisions. An organisation has the right to appeal such a decision before the competent court. Pursuant to Article 38 of the Charitable Associations and Community Organisations Law No. (1) of 2000, where a dissolution decision is challenged before the competent court, the organisation may continue its activities until an interim or final judicial decision is issued ordering the suspension of its activities or its dissolution.

Council of Ministers' Decision No. (1) of 2000 transfers the role of the competent ministries to the Minister of Interior. Article (6) stipulates that: "The competent ministry shall be responsible for monitoring the work of associations and organisations in accordance with the provisions of this law. The ministry may monitor the activities of any association or organisation pursuant to a written and reasoned decision issued by the competent minister in each case, in order to verify that its funds have been spent for the purposes for which they were allocated and in accordance with the provisions of this law." As some officials at the Ministry of Interior focus heavily on security, their approach does not encourage material support for civil society organisations, making it difficult to obtain approvals smoothly. It worth noting that the law applies in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, despite the fact that they operate under different authorities.

Oversight may be carried out by the competent ministry with respect to plans and activities, by the Ministry of Interior with respect to compliance with the provisions of the Law on Charitable Associations and Civil Society Organisations, and by the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau with respect to compliance with financial and administrative regulations. In practice, however, the Ministry of Interior may sometimes intervene in the formation of the boards of directors of civil society organisations. One example is the dissolution of the Board of Directors of the Arab Construction Project Association and the pressure exerted on the organisation's officials to admit members selected by the President's Office to take over the board. In this case, AMAN Coalition received a request for advocacy from members of the General Assembly and the Board of Directors of the Arab Construction Project Association, claiming that officials from the Palestinian Ministry of Interior had attempted to interfere in the work of the organisation by seeking to force the inclusion of persons chosen by these officials in the General Assembly and the Board of Directors.

Civil society organisations have also faced harassment and attacks by Israeli settlers and military forces. For example, in April 2026, staff members of the Sharek Youth Forum were reportedly attacked at the Youth Village in Kafr Ni'ma, west of Ramallah. The incident was part of a broader pattern of attacks against the organisation's civic activities.

In January 2026, Israel announced that it would terminate the activities of 37 international relief organisations operating in Gaza because they refused to submit employee lists and comply with the new security registration procedures, including license renewal and the provision of identity information for all staff members for security screening purposes. As a result, 57 international employees departed in February 2026 due to decisions and procedures of the occupation authorities targeting international organisations.

Israel, as the occupying power, has also issued military orders in the occupied Palestinian territory that have imposed restrictions on Palestinian civil society organisations, particularly those working on human rights and documenting violations. These measures have included the designation of some staff members of these organisations as terrorists, restricting the work of the organisations with which they are affiliated and affecting their sustainability and ability to operate. Some individuals have been designated as terrorists by Israel, as the occupying power, without any legal proceedings being initiated against them.

A specific example is the case of Salah Hammouri, a Palestinian-French human rights lawyer who worked with Addameer, a Palestinian organisation providing legal assistance to Palestinian prisoners. In December 2022, then Israeli Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked publicly described Hammouri as a "terrorist" following the revocation of his residency and his deportation to France. Israeli authorities alleged that Hammouri was affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and had carried out activities on its behalf. He was

held in administrative detention without charge, and he was not convicted in the proceedings leading to his deportation. This case illustrates concerns regarding the use of terrorism-related allegations and measures against Palestinian human rights defenders, including the procedural safeguards available to challenge such measures.

Israeli authorities have also interfered with the work of civil society organisations through terrorism-related allegations directed at the organisations themselves. on 7 April 2026, Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P) announced the closure of one of its branches following ongoing pressure and restrictions linked to Israel's designation of the organisation, along with other Palestinian organisations, as a "terrorist organisation". Human Rights Watch and other international actors have challenged these allegations, stating that they are unsubstantiated. The organisation has played a major role in documenting violations against Palestinian children, including detention practices, ill-treatment, and denial of fair trial guarantees.

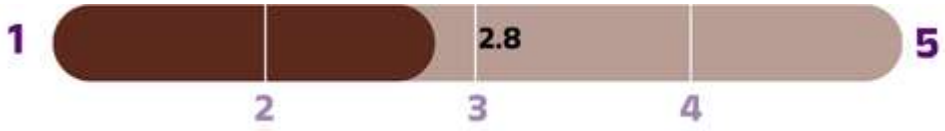
Similar concerns arose in the case of the Islamic Charitable Society in Hebron. On 14 April 2026, Israeli authorities closed the organisation and arrested its chairman, Hatem Al-Bakri, a former Minister of Religious Endowments (Awqaf). The authorities alleged that the organisation had been operating "illegally" and claimed that it had links to "terrorism" – allegations that were strongly denied by the organisation. Established in 1961 and licensed by the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development, the organisation provides services to more than 6,000 orphans from approximately 2,000 families. The closure took place shortly before the local elections scheduled for 25 April 2026, in which Al-Bakri was reportedly intending to run. This raised concerns among civil society actors about the potential impact of the measure on civic activities and participation in the electoral process in Hebron.

Taken together, these incidents reflect the continued deterioration of the enabling environment for civil society in the West Bank, particularly affecting freedom of association, operational space, and the protection of human rights defenders.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources

Score: 2.8/5



3.1 Accessibility of Resources

In the Palestinian context, civil society organisations working on issues central to the political system and official institutions – in particular, accountability for the respect of rights and public freedoms – face significant constraints to accessing resources. Governmental policies and practices have restricted their access to local resources through the public treasury. At the same time, there is no specific allocation for civil society organisations in the general budget. In some cases, the government may approve funds for particular organisations, but there are no clear criteria determining who may qualify. This can lead to perceptions of favouritism and has contributed to instability in the funding of many civil society organisations, as well as the depletion of human resources and essential expertise needed for civil society work. The government's disbursement of financial assistance to civil society organisations and charitable organisations is determined at sessions of the Council of Ministers. However, the published decisions do not indicate the amount of support, identify the beneficiaries, lay out the criteria by which the decisions were made, or describe the context in which the support is granted.

Although information about some international funding opportunities and application procedures is publicly available online, organisations differ in their capacity to identify suitable opportunities and meet donor requirements. Research on Palestinian civil society indicates that established donor relationships, networking and proposal-writing capacity can give larger, urban-based organisations an advantage over smaller, community-based groups. Access to funding may also depend on institutional and financial capacity: for example, the oPt Humanitarian Fund requires prospective partners to undergo eligibility screening, due diligence and capacity assessments. Public access to information therefore does not necessarily translate into equal access to funding.

Civil society organisations may also experience challenges receiving funds. Banks may delay or withhold transfers due concerns about money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities, without providing reasonable justification, which has hindered organisations' access to funds for their activities and programmes. In September 2025, several Palestinian human rights organisations, including Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, were subjected to U.S. sanctions. In November 2025, the organisations reported that the sanctions had directly affected their operations; the impacts included the closure of their bank accounts, which prevented them from receiving funding and paying staff, as well as the loss of funds, particularly from U.S. donors. These measures created significant barriers to the organisations' access to financial resources and their ability to continue their activities.

For example, in December 2025, AMAN Coalition received a request for legal support from a member of the board of directors of a charity in Gaza after a local bank refused to open a bank account without providing justification. AMAN contacted the Palestine Monetary Authority, which indicated that authority for opening bank accounts falls solely within the competence of the bank. This incident constitutes a violation of the right of citizens and civil society organisations to access information and to timely response to complaints, which contributes to obstructing accountability mechanisms and social oversight.

Israeli allegations of links between Palestinian civil society organisations and designated terrorist groups have prompted scrutiny by international donors, but have not automatically led donors to withdraw support. In a joint statement dated 12 July 2022, nine European governments stated that Israel had not provided substantial information justifying a change in their policies towards six Palestinian organisations it had designated as terrorist organisations. They affirmed their continued cooperation with Palestinian civil society in the absence of such evidence, while stating that they would act if contrary evidence emerged.

Due to the changing political and security conditions, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the availability of funding remains unstable. In recent years, a significant proportion of the funding for civil society organisations in the Gaza Strip has been channelled through international organisations operating in the Gaza Strip with whom they partner for relief and humanitarian assistance activities.

Access to funding and the implementation of activities have also been affected by Israeli restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid – including technical resources and essential equipment restricted under "dual-use" restrictions – and on the entry of cash into the Gaza Strip.

These restrictions, together with the high commission fees charged for cash transfers – which reportedly reached 50% in 2025 before declining to 12% in December 2025, depleted resources available to organisations and beneficiaries and reduced the purchasing power of cash assistance.

3.2 Effectiveness of Resources

The relationship between international donors and Palestinian civil society organisations is characterised by a clear hierarchical dynamic, whereby funding tools and conditions have evolved from temporary arrangements for managing resources into a quasi-permanent structure that reshapes civil society according to donors' frameworks. This is reflected in an

interconnected set of political conditions, verification and compliance procedures, short funding cycles, pre-defined indicators, and shifting priorities that often follow international funding agendas more closely than the longer-term trajectories of Palestinian civil society. This raises a core concern: when donor's accountability and oversight standards limit Palestinian civil society organisations, determining what civic action is accepted, which issues can be funded, how they can be framed, and what language can be used – the funding and reporting requirements that donors use as oversight tools may become mechanisms that shape institutional identity and create significant administrative burdens that overshadow the substance of civil society work.

International funding patterns in Palestine reveal a gap between donor priorities and local needs. Development approaches may focus primarily on addressing the immediate effects of challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and displacement, while giving less attention to their underlying structural causes. This can affect the ability of civil society organisations to address longer-term structural issues and may contribute to disparities in access to external funding, with organisations that have greater capacity to meet donor requirements often better positioned to secure resources, while smaller, local organisations may face greater barriers despite their proximity to local communities and understanding of their needs.

The outcomes of the dialogue between the Palestinian NGOs Network and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in January 2026 demonstrated efforts to move beyond a hierarchical donor relationship towards a more integrated partnership. This included an emphasis on "strengthening existing partnerships and deepening mutual relations", as well as considering networking and coalition-building a "strategic option". Regarding funding requirements, the recommendations called for "improving the efficiency and depth of programmes in ways that reduce administrative costs" and "adopting medium- and long-term, results-based projects", reflecting a need for greater flexibility in the financial and administrative requirements imposed by donors.

The recommendations focused on redirecting funding towards addressing actual local needs, particularly in the agricultural sector, which has faced a "halt in funding for animal feed despite increasing challenges for sheep farmers". They also called for greater attention to women in light of the "growing number of widows, young women and orphans", support for women-led micro-enterprises, and the inclusion of marginalised groups, such as "persons with disabilities, in donor programmes". More fundamentally, the outcomes emphasised that "financial support should be accompanied by political support" and that "humanitarian assistance should not replace support on political issues". Networking and coalition-building were also identified as a "strategic option" to fair representation across sectors and geographic areas.

The relationship between international donors and Palestinian organisations remains marked by an imbalance of power, although the outcomes of the Palestinian NGOs Network–UNDP conference in January 2026 indicated a move towards a more integrated partnership through stronger mutual relations, networking, and coalition-building. The conference also called for more efficient programmes, reduced administrative costs, and a shift towards medium- and long-term, results-based programmes, while urging donors to better align funding with local needs, including support for agriculture, women and marginalised groups.

3.3 Sustainability of Resources

Palestinian civil society organisations obtain funding from several sources; however, funding is almost exclusively from international donors and remains inadequate and irregular, making it difficult for organisations to sustain their operations and achieve results. The political

environment, characterised by a state of war, instability, and the weakening prospects of a political solution based on the realisation of the two-state solution, have contributed to donors' hesitation to continue funding aimed at supporting the transition to statehood. The stagnation of the political process, Israeli government's unwillingness to facilitate the entry of international assistance to the Palestinian people, and the division within Palestinian political leadership, have all undermined the sustainability of support. In addition, some organisations reliance on a single source of funding weakens strategic planning and undermines organisational continuity.

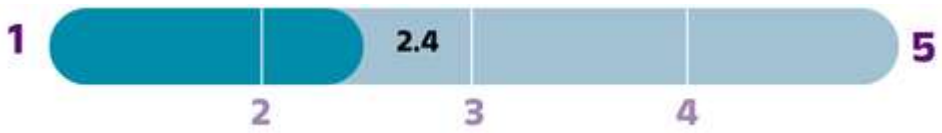
The main challenge is that Palestinian civil society organisations operate in a politically and economically unstable and changing context. This instability leads to shifts in funding opportunities, agendas, and priorities.

In some cases, organisations may experience gaps in funding cycles, as donors do not provide funding continuously over several years. Some funding is project-based and cannot be used to fund the organisation's core needs; it is also limited to a specific timeframe. This creates gaps in funding after projects come to an end. These gaps impose constraints on an organisation's ability to engage in long-term strategic planning, disrupt staffing, and limit the continuation of programmes and activities after the funded project is completed. The reduction and suspension of US foreign assistance in 2025 demonstrate the challenges with the sustainability of funding for Palestinian civil society organisations, as the loss of funding to Palestinian organisations impacted humanitarian and development services in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Before Trump took office, USAID was allocated approximately USD 446 million to disburse to partner organisations in Gaza in 2025, according to USAID officials. Following the suspension of foreign assistance under Executive Order 14169, US$ 383 million was released after a waiver was issued, while approximately US$ 40 million was cut, mostly from direct cash assistance programmes. Several non-governmental organisations also reported that, despite approved contracts or grants, pledged payments were not disbursed, resulting in delays or reductions in essential services.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

4. Open and Responsive State

Score: 2.4/5



4.1 Transparency

The 2025 Open Budget Survey (OBS) recorded modest improvements in Palestine's budget transparency and oversight scores compared with 2023. The transparency score increased from 8 to 14 out of 100, while the oversight score rose from 17 to 19 out of 100. These results indicate continuing weaknesses in the availability of budget information, opportunities for public participation and institutional oversight.

Article 26 of the Amended Basic Law of 2003 recognises Palestinians' right to participate in political life individually and collectively. However, this provision does not itself establish detailed procedures for civil society organisations to participate in the development of public policies. In relation to the budget process, AMAN has called for clear institutional arrangements enabling civil society participation throughout the cycle, from preparation to evaluation.

Access to information is the subject of a separate legislative process. A draft decree-law on the right of access to information, prepared by the Anti-Corruption Commission in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, was published for public consultation from 25 October to 25 November 2025 on the "Tashree'" legislative platform. In January 2026, the Ministry published a report responding to questions and comments received during that consultation. The Council of Ministers subsequently discussed the draft at its second reading on 31 March 2026. These steps demonstrate progress in developing the proposed legislation, but publication for consultation and Cabinet consideration do not, by themselves, establish that it has been enacted or entered into force.

Despite the absence of a law addressing the right to access to information, other legislation promotes the publication of information. For example, the Law on the Central Elections Commission includes provisions related to the publication of information and citizens' access to it.

There are documented examples of government bodies responding to civil society requests for information. In an article published on 17 June 2026, the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN) reported that the Ministry of Social Development had responded to its enquiries about the selection of charitable organisations and arrangements for distributing assistance in the northern West Bank. The Ministry explained that selection criteria included legal registration, regularised legal status, alignment with its strategic plan, and sufficient administrative and logistical capacity to distribute assistance.

Currently, there is also no centralised archiving and registration system for public administrative records that clearly defines what information is confidential, what is public, and how such information can be accessed.

Overall, the limited availability and accessibility of public information continue to constrain meaningful public participation and accountability. This lack of transparency, in turn, contributes to restricting the space in which civil society organisations can engage with public institutions and hold them accountable.

4.2 Participation

Palestine lacks a written policy regulating the structures and mechanisms for cooperation between civil society and government in the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and oversight of public policies. This persists despite repeated statements by the government emphasising partnership in public policymaking and procedural steps undertaken by the Palestinian Authority to promote participation – such as the launch of the "Tashree" legislative platform and efforts by several ministries to involve civil society representatives in the preparation of their annual plans. Nevertheless, public participation remains limited, contributing to declining public confidence in the inclusiveness and transparency of decision-making processes. [16]

The Palestinian government has stated in official documents – especially, the Government Reform Agenda issued by the Council of Ministers on 15 April 2022 – that it intends to involve civil society in public policymaking. The agenda emphasises that the role of civil society organisations should be undertaken through an integrated vision and partnership approach aimed at achieving development, without weakening or restricting their role. It also stressed the activation of transparency and disclosure mechanisms and reaffirmed the government's role in objective evaluation and oversight to ensure coordination with civil society organisations.

The nineteenth Palestinian government has also given particular attention to the role of civil society as a partner in policymaking. During its 2 April 2024 session, the Council of Ministers decided to assign heads of government departments to meet regularly with civil society organisations to discuss matters of shared concern related to their area of competency in a manner that furthers the government's objectives and programmes and the public interest, and to create effective and sustainable mechanisms for communication with civil society organisations. Despite the establishment of these committees, it remains evident that there

are no permanent mechanisms, nor centralised or sectoral official administrative units, dedicated to facilitating the participation of Palestinian civil society organisations in the policymaking process.

Several governmental statements also emphasised the importance of engaging with civil society, maintaining openness toward it, recognising it as a key governmental partner, and ensuring transparency, particularly in areas related to reform and development in service of the public interest. While civil society participation has not extended to all areas of policymaking, these measures indicate government engagement with civil society in certain areas.

The government has also made efforts to involve civil society in the approval of the Palestinian budget. The Palestinian Minister of Finance and Planning presented key features of the "2026 Emergency Budget" to Palestinian civil society organisations. The budget relies on expenditures based on the cash flows available to the public treasury according to priorities aimed at addressing existential risks and the current regional challenges facing Palestine, particularly in light of Israel's continued withholding of Palestinian clearance revenues, which constitute approximately 70% of the Palestinian government's revenues. In this context, the participation of civil society organisations and citizens in discussions on public resources is important for promoting transparency, strengthening trust between the government and citizens, and improving public resource management.

Thus, the participation of Palestinian civil society organisations in public policymaking in Palestine has, in most cases, remained superficial or symbolic and has not reached the level of meaningful influence over decision-making processes. Although official mechanisms exist that allow civil society organisations to express their views, their ability to shape policies or hold authorities accountable for implementation remains limited due to the absence of a supportive political and legislative environment and the dominance of governmental control over final decisions.

Recently, Palestinian citizens in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip participated in local elections, exercising their right to vote and choose their representatives in local councils. This provides a practical example of citizens' participation in public affairs and demonstrates that opportunities for civic participation exist in practice, including through local electoral processes.

Overall, the available evidence indicates that while civil society did participate in the budget process, its participation in decision-making remains limited and is not yet sufficiently institutionalised. In this regard, the AMAN Coalition emphasised that effective civil society participation should not be limited to ad hoc meetings but requires clear institutional mechanisms to ensure the involvement of Palestinian civil society organisations throughout the budget process, from preparation to evaluation. Strengthening such mechanisms would help ensure more meaningful participation and contribute to greater transparency and accountability in the management of public resources. This also requires strengthening transparency through the publication of information and enhancing oversight mechanisms. [14]

4.3 Accountability

The absence of a functioning Palestinian Legislative Council weakens legislative oversight of the executive authority and governmental institutions, including scrutiny of government reporting, policy implementation and performance. It also removes an important institutional channel through which civil society organisations can contribute to public debate and hold officials accountable. [15]

Social accountability, through which citizens and civil society organisations scrutinise government actions and seek explanations for decisions, also faces significant constraints. AMAN's assessment found that consultation and feedback practices vary across government institutions. Although some bodies engage constructively with civil society, central government bodies do not consistently explain how organisations' contributions have influenced final policies. This makes it difficult for organisations to assess whether their proposals have been considered and to seek explanations when recommendations are not adopted. Executive authority dominance in decision-making, difficulties accessing sufficiently detailed information, and weak institutional arrangements for civil society participation in policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation further limit the effectiveness of social accountability. [15]

According to a recent assessment by the AMAN Coalition, government or official responses to civil society actors remain limited. Official bodies or officials do not generally provide information or disclose official procedures related to policymaking or implementation. For example, the government has not published the documents on which sectoral and non-sectoral strategic plans were based – such as the *National Programme for Development and Reform 2025–2026* and *A unified Palestine: Institutional and economic transformation: Laying the foundations for the realisation of an independent Palestinian state* – on the Council of Ministers' website. It also has not published the strategic plans that it has adopted by decisions of the Council of Ministers. In instances where the government has responded to requests for information related to policymaking, the information provided has tended to be very general, without adequate detail. [15]

In addition, the limited independence of official oversight bodies, including the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau and the Anti-Corruption Commission, remains a significant challenge. Weak institutional independence and the limited effectiveness of these oversight bodies undermine public accountability and restrict the ability of civil society organisations to monitor policy implementation and identify governance gaps. This is compounded by the failure to implement the recommendations of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in its 2022 annual report on the need to avoid restricting the activities of civil society, particularly in areas covered by the six principles assessed in this report.

Significant challenges remain, particularly regarding the continued discussions on the adoption of a new Cybercrime Law that would seek to balance freedom of expression with the protection of privacy. This issue has remained under debate since the beginning of the year without legislative resolution. At the same time, the government of Dr. Mohammad Mustafa has continued efforts to strengthen communication with citizens and civil society organisations, including by involving civil society in discussions concerning decree-laws, with the aim of promoting transparency and accountability. However, government feedback on civil society submissions remains inconsistent. When authorities do not explain which recommendations were accepted or rejected, or provide reasons for their decisions, organisations cannot readily assess how their contributions influenced the final legislation. This limits transparency in the consultation process and makes it harder to hold decision-makers accountable.

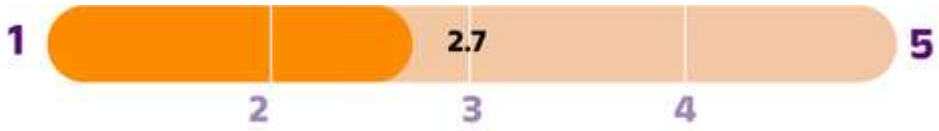
For example, the law by decree on the 2026 Palestinian local elections was issued despite substantive comments submitted by civil society organisations during discussions of previous drafts. This decree-law introduced a new condition that had not appeared in any of the previous drafts, namely “requiring each candidate to sign a declaration committing to the programme of the Palestine Liberation Organization”. Palestinian civil society organisations considered this condition to constitute a serious infringement on the right to political participation and to be inconsistent with the Basic Law and international conventions. Palestinian human rights civil society organisations issued a press statement in this regard.

Due to limited access to information and the absence of clear institutional channels for involving civil society in monitoring and decision-making processes, civil society organisations’ ability to perform their role effectively remains constrained. The weak independence of public oversight institutions further restricts the space available for civil society to contribute to the promotion of transparency, accountability, and participatory engagement.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society

Score: 2.7/5



5.1 Public Discourse and Constructive Dialogue on Civil Society

Evidence exists of formal efforts by Palestinian governmental bodies to foster discourse on the rights of civil society organisations and their effective role.

Recently, the Palestinian government has expressed its commitment to strengthening its partnership with civil society organisations. Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa has also emphasised the importance of participatory engagement with civil society. However, there is still a need for a clear and binding public policy to institutionalise this partnership and strengthen the role of civil society organisations in development and policymaking.

According to civil society representatives interviewed for AMAN's assessment, the openness of Palestinian government bodies to civil society varies between institutions and according to the issues under discussion. Interviewees reported that engagement sometimes depends on individual officials' willingness to consult and share information, rather than consistently applied institutional procedures. The assessment also identified positive examples of cooperation in sectoral planning, including the sharing of plans by the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. These examples demonstrate opportunities for engagement, while indicating that consistent arrangements for consultation and information-sharing remain insufficiently institutionalised. [15]

Since 2021, and intensifying since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip in October 2023, Israeli authorities have increasingly portrayed Palestinian civil society organisations and humanitarian actors as "security threats". For example, in 2021, the Israeli Ministry of Defense designated six Palestinian NGOs as "terrorist organisations", claiming in an official statement that these groups were "controlled" by senior members of the Popular Front for the Liberation

of Palestine and alleging that they used humanitarian funding provided by European governments “as a primary source for financing the activities of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine”.

This narrative has subsequently been used to justify raids, arrests, funding restrictions and public delegitimization campaigns targeting civil society organisations and humanitarian workers. For example, in June 2025, the United States Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on a major Palestinian legal organisation concerned with prisoners’ and detainees’ affairs, along with five other charitable entities operating in the Middle East, Africa and Europe, accusing them of supporting Palestinian factions and armed groups, including the military wing of Hamas, under the cover of humanitarian assistance in Gaza.

Palestinian civil society has historically combined service provision and community development with support for national rights and self-determination. Although charitable organisations existed well before 1967, grassroots initiatives expanded during the late 1970s and early 1980s, before the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994. Many of these initiatives sought to strengthen communities’ resilience, provide services independently of the Israeli administration, and support resistance to the occupation. Civil society work therefore frequently overlapped with participation in the Palestinian national movement, while encompassing diverse organisations, objectives and forms of engagement. [25]

Palestinian human rights organisations have also pursued international advocacy to document violations and promote accountability through United Nations mechanisms and international judicial processes. Their work has faced Israeli restrictions, including the designation of six Palestinian civil society organisations as terrorist organisations in October 2021. UN human rights experts condemned these designations and called for their withdrawal, expressing concern about the misuse of counter-terrorism measures against organisations promoting human rights and accountability. [26]

For civil society organisations, advocacy campaigns play an important role in highlighting existing crises. In the West Bank, these efforts focus on advocating for the adoption of a law guaranteeing the right to access information and for amendments to the Cybercrime Law. In the Gaza Strip, they emphasise the need to establish a humanitarian framework for the delivery and distribution of aid and to coordinate these efforts with international partners in a manner that serves the national interest.

Media coverage of the role of Palestinian civil society actors has not been balanced, influenced by positive or negative bias toward the institutions concerned, as well as by the internal political division. For example, in anti-corruption efforts, the media continues to play an important role in raising awareness and drawing attention to corruption-related issues. However, its effectiveness remains limited. According to the AMAN Coalition’s 2025 public opinion survey, published in February 2026, 54% of respondents considered the media’s role in combating corruption to be weak, while 41% considered it good or moderate. At the same time, 66% identified digital media as the most effective means of exposing and highlighting corruption cases. These findings indicate that while the media remains an important actor in anti-corruption efforts, there are still significant challenges affecting its ability to perform this role effectively. [19]

5.2 Perception of Civil Society and Civic Engagement

Some civil society institutions, particularly professional and sectoral representative organisations, have demonstrated an ability to influence government responses through collective action and negotiation. For example, in June 2026 (outside of this document's reporting period), the Doctors' Association suspended its strike following extended dialogue with the government and the understandings reached through the negotiations. The Association stated that ending the strike was intended to allow for the implementation of the understandings reached with the government, while emphasising that this did not constitute a withdrawal from its rights and demands.

The 2025 Arab Barometer survey reported a noticeable increase in public trust in civil society organisations: in 2025, 38% of Palestinians expressed trust in civil society organisations, compared to 27% in 2023, an increase of 11 percentage points. In contrast, 59% of respondents stated that they did not trust civil society organisations. This increase reflects a shift in citizens' priorities, as many increasingly view civil society organisations as more responsive to their basic needs in the context of declining governmental performance. [20]

The report indicates significantly higher levels of trust in humanitarian organisations – specifically, in the Gaza Strip, where 75% of respondents expressed trust in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, while 66% expressed trust in the Palestine Red Crescent Society. In contrast, trust in the political authorities in Gaza remained limited, reaching only 32%. Trust in Palestinian Authority institutions also remains weak. According to the report, only 23% of respondents in the West Bank expressed trust in the government, compared to 74% who stated that they did not trust it. [20]

Civic education is incorporated into the Palestinian school curriculum through subjects such as national and social education. In addition, civic and political awareness is promoted through school-based initiatives. For example, in April 2025, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in partnership with the Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, launched a school debate project aimed at strengthening students' knowledge and skills regarding women's civic and political rights and participation. The project also sought to promote constructive dialogue, awareness of rights, and the concepts of citizenship and belonging.

Several challenges remain, including the impact of the Israeli occupation on the educational environment, and the fact that civic education curricula tend to focus more on freedoms, rights, and democracy than on active political participation.

5.3 Civic Equality and Inclusion

The legal, social, and economic framework in Palestine reflects a commitment to the principles of equality of rights and opportunities for all individuals – particularly marginalised groups, with the aim of enabling their participation in civil society. At the international level, the State of Palestine has ratified major international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Accordingly, the legal framework demonstrates a commitment to equal rights and opportunities for all individuals without discrimination. [28, 29]

While no formal social or economic barriers exist, and there is a degree of social tolerance and respect for diversity among the majority population groups, societal discrimination against women persists despite improvements in education and employment equality. Despite a degree of social tolerance and respect for diversity, societal discrimination against women

persists, alongside inequalities in education and employment. People from areas perceived as less developed or of lower socioeconomic status may also face prejudice based on where they live.

In an effort to reduce social and economic barriers and promote tolerance and respect, the Palestinian government, in cooperation with civil society organisations, has sought to empower these groups in order to promote equality in opportunities and rights and strengthen their inclusion in society through economic and social initiatives. Examples include corporate social responsibility initiatives that support the most vulnerable groups in Palestinian society.

In addition, the Palestinian government has supported vulnerable groups through direct cooperation with civil society organisations. For example, in October 2025, the Ministry of Social Development signed a memorandum of understanding with SOS Children's Villages – Palestine to support 500 families registered with the Ministry in Bethlehem and Hebron, as part of the "Empowering Communities in the South of the West Bank" project. The project provided food aid vouchers and winter clothing for children from these families and formed part of the Ministry's efforts to expand partnerships with organisations working in the field of social development.

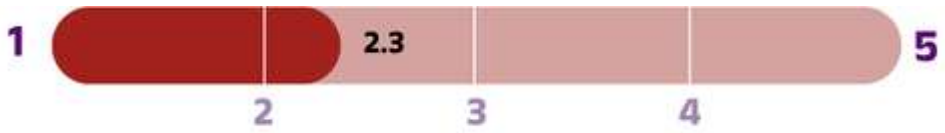
In addition, cooperative associations play a central role in strengthening Palestinian civil society by empowering marginalised groups, particularly under difficult economic conditions. These cooperatives support economically marginalised and deprived groups and contribute to their social empowerment and inclusion. There are approximately 30 such cooperative associations active throughout the West Bank, 9 of which are fully managed by women, thus contributing to their empowerment, resilience, and expanded opportunities within society.

Despite these efforts, marginalised groups continue to face numerous economic and social constraints resulting from escalating military operations and widespread restrictions on the movement of Palestinians, which have negatively affected access to rights such as healthcare, education, and employment.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

Score: 2.3/5



6.1 Digital Rights and Freedoms

In Palestine, digital rights and freedoms are affected by overlapping restrictions imposed by Palestinian authorities, Israel – as the occupying power, and private social media companies. These restrictions affect the ability of civil society organisations, journalists, human rights defenders, and activists to access, publish, share, and document information online. The challenges arise from both legal and security measures regulating online expression and from content moderation and access restrictions imposed by digital platforms.

In the Palestinian legislative context, the Cybercrime Law (Decree-Law No. (10) of 2018 and its amendments) provides a legal basis for regulating online activity and has been criticised for the broad and ambiguous language of some of its provisions. It has been associated with website blocking and the prosecution of activists on charges such as “incitement”. Civil society organisations have challenged the law because of concerns that its provisions may be used to restrict online expression on grounds such as threats to “national unity” or “public order”. Civil society actors, including journalists and human rights defenders, have also faced legal threats and prosecution in connection with critical online publications, as documented by Al-Haq and other civil society monitoring institutions. [4]

The restrictions on online expression also include the proposed “Facebook Law”, referring to the 2021 draft law on preventing incitement on social media platforms. The draft seeks to require social media companies to remove content considered to incite violence or undermine state security and uses terminology that may allow for broad interpretation. Civil society and other observers have viewed the proposal as an additional potential restriction on freedom of

opinion and expression online – particularly when considered alongside existing legal and administrative restrictions affecting Palestinian digital content.

The digital environment is also affected by selective restrictions imposed by Palestinian authorities on political expression online. In the West Bank, Palestinian security agencies have arrested activists and others in connection with political positions or content published on social media, particularly where posts were considered insulting to the President or security agencies. Examples include the arrest of human rights lawyer Muhannad Karajah in October 2025 and the arrest of activist Ramah Al-Bayaa in September 2025. Al-Bayaa was reportedly interrogated on charges of "defamation and slander" against the Palestinian Authority under the Cybercrime Law and detained for four days before being released on bail by the Ramallah Court.

The Palestinian Authority has also restricted access to media content through internet and media blocking. One example is the blocking of Al Jazeera in 2025, following accusations by the Palestinian Authority that the channel was inciting sedition and interfering in internal Palestinian affairs. The West Bank has also witnessed repeated arrests of journalists by Palestinian security agencies in connection with content published on social media or critical media coverage, including cases in which security summonses resulted in detention.

At the same time, no documented evidence was identified during the reporting period of Palestinian governmental bodies engaging in systematic disinformation through deliberate manipulation of information. Similarly, no sufficiently documented case was identified of a Palestinian civil society organisation or other non-governmental actor engaging in systematic disinformation or deliberate manipulation of information.

Israel, as the occupying power, exercises significant control over telecommunications infrastructure, internet access and telecommunications frequencies in the occupied Palestinian territory. This contributes to restrictions on access to information and online expression, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Israeli authorities – particularly the Israeli Cyber Unit – have also submitted requests to social media platforms to remove or restrict Palestinian content and accounts. Between 7 October and 14 November 2023, the Cyber Unit submitted approximately 9,500 takedown requests to social media platforms, 60% of which were directed to Meta, which reportedly complied with 94% of the requests. [21]

Restrictions and content moderation by social media companies have also affected Palestinian journalists, activists, human rights organisations and media institutions. A July 2025 report by 7amleh (The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media) documented cases involving the removal of posts and accounts, restrictions on access to content, including shadow banning, blocking of live broadcasts, and closure of media and institutional pages. The report also observed that these practices affected accounts belonging to human rights organisations and media institutions, potentially obstructing their ability to document violations, communicate information and conduct advocacy. 7amleh also documented violations across X/Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Telegram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp during the first quarter of 2026, including content and account removals, restrictions on access to content, blocking of live broadcasts, and closure of institutional pages.

6.2 Digital Security and Privacy

Digital security and privacy present a distinct set of challenges for civil society organisations in Palestine. These include surveillance and monitoring by authorities, inadequate legal protection for personal and digital data, limited safeguards governing access to electronic information, and the use of relevant advanced surveillance technologies. Together, these

factors can expose civil society actors, journalists, and human rights defenders to monitoring and targeting and can undermine the security of their digital communications.

Published reports have indicated that Israel, as the occupying power, has used sophisticated spyware to target Palestinian human rights activists. According to reports citing statements by UN researchers, spyware has been used to target six Palestinian human rights activists. Such software can provide access to information stored on targeted devices and to communications and other activities conducted through them. Al-Haq has also reported Israel's use of advanced surveillance and monitoring technologies, biometric databases and extensive surveillance cameras, particularly in the context of the war in the Gaza Strip. These practices raise concerns regarding the protection of digital communications and the security of human rights defenders operating in both physical and digital spaces.

The broader digital environment is also affected by content moderation, surveillance and restrictions on access to digital services. The Hashtag Palestine 2025 report documented 3,452 digital violations and highlighted recurring patterns – including content censorship, incitement and hate speech, targeting and harassment, restrictions on digital access, and exclusion from digital economy platforms. The destruction of telecommunications infrastructure in Gaza was also associated with estimated losses of US$ 90 million. These developments contribute to an environment in which civil society organisations may face increased risks when communicating, documenting violations or accessing digital services. [22]

The legal framework also provides limited protection for digital privacy and leaves gaps in data protection, reporting mechanisms and technical capacity for forensic verification. Although Law by Decree No. (10) of 2018, which addresses cybercrimes and information technology, regulates aspects of digital activity, concerns remain regarding the adequacy of the broader legal and institutional framework for protecting digital privacy and providing effective remedies.

With regard to surveillance, Palestinian law enforcement agencies, including the Cybercrime Unit of the police and the Public Prosecution, pursue digital violations committed by individuals and non-governmental actors under the Cybercrime Law. A key concern, however, is the breadth of the surveillance powers provided under the law. These powers include monitoring communications, collecting data and searching wired and wireless devices for reasons related to public security, subject to judicial orders. The scope of these powers raises concerns about the safeguards available to protect privacy and prevent disproportionate interference with digital communications.

6.3 Digital Accessibility

Internet access in Palestine is relatively widespread, but its accessibility and quality are affected by significant disparities in infrastructure, service availability and the broader political and security context. While most Palestinian households have access to the Internet, Israeli restrictions, infrastructure damage and recurring disruptions in Gaza, as well as restrictions affecting online content, continue to create barriers to meaningful and reliable digital access.

Before 2023, official sources reported that 93.5% of Palestinian households had access to the Internet, including 94.0% in the West Bank and 92.6% in the Gaza Strip. The results also showed no significant gap in internet availability among Palestinian households in rural communities (92.7%) and refugee camps (93.0%). While these figures indicated a relatively high level of household internet availability across Palestine prior to 2023, subsequent developments in the Gaza Strip have significantly affected the reliability and continuity of internet access. [23]

Access to the Internet in Palestine is a highly complex issue due to the particular circumstances of the occupied Palestinian territory and the obstacles imposed by Israel as the occupying power through the destruction of infrastructure and discriminatory policies. Clear disparities exist between the type and quality of digital services available in the occupied Palestinian territory and those available to settlers in Israeli settlements. For example, in the West Bank, Palestinians have historically had access to 3G services, while settlers and settlements have benefited from 4G and 5G services. These disparities affect the quality and availability of digital services and make access to a secure and reliable digital environment a continuing challenge for civil society organisations that rely on the Internet for communication, information-sharing, and documentation.

The situation has been particularly severe in the Gaza Strip since 2023. Israel, as the occupying power, has exercised significant control over telecommunications infrastructure and internet access during the ongoing war, while Gaza has experienced repeated disruptions to internet and telecommunications services. These disruptions have largely isolated 2.3 million people from one another and from the outside world, resulting in what amounted to a near media blackout. These violations occur within an already highly restrictive environment, as the Israeli occupation has, over the years, imposed increasing restrictions on telecommunications infrastructure in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel maintains control over internet access and telecommunications frequencies, enabling it to exercise both direct and indirect control over Palestinian content. During the repeated internet shutdowns in the Gaza Strip during the genocidal war, citizens attempted to find alternative means of connectivity, including the use of internet-enabled e-SIM cards.

The scale of these disruptions is also reflected in internet traffic data. Internet traffic in Gaza declined by more than 80% at the beginning of the October 2023 war, coinciding with widespread electricity outages in Gaza caused by repeated direct attacks on civilian telecommunications infrastructure, restrictions on access to electricity, and technical failures affecting communication services. According to World Bank data, before the war, mobile communications services in the Gaza Strip operated only on second-generation (2G) networks, without access to mobile internet services through third-generation (3G) networks. This placed Gaza among the areas that continued to rely exclusively on second-generation mobile technology. [24]

Restrictions on digital accessibility also extend to access to and interaction with online content. The "Facebook Law" (the 2021 draft law on preventing incitement on social media platforms) seeks to compel social media companies to remove content considered to incite violence or undermine state security. The law uses vague terminology that is open to broad interpretation. It is widely viewed as a direct and serious threat to the right to freedom of opinion and expression of Palestinians and others in the digital sphere, and as an additional "legal" restriction alongside the numerous existing constraints imposed on Palestinian voices and advocacy for the Palestinian cause relating to Palestinian content on social media platforms. Such restrictions can affect digital accessibility by limiting individuals' ability to access, share, and engage with information and content online.

The CSO's readiness to adapt to artificial intelligence remains at an early stage, although there is interest and willingness among civil society organisations to incorporate artificial intelligence into their work and adapt to its use.

C) Recommendations

Improving the enabling environment for civil society in Palestine requires ending all forms of practices that restrict fundamental civic freedoms, whether by Israel as the occupying power, the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank, or the de facto authorities in the Gaza Strip. It also requires reforming restrictive legal frameworks, strengthening institutional openness, ensuring sustainable and accessible funding, and protecting human rights defenders, advocates of public freedoms, and anti-corruption activists from sanctions and arbitrary designations. To achieve these objectives, the following urgent recommendations are proposed:

To the Palestinian government:

- Simplify procedures for the registration of organisations by adhering to the provisions of the law, which stipulate the automatic approval of registration applications if no response is issued within 60 days. Efforts should also be made to strengthen partnerships and complementarity with civil society organisations by safeguarding citizens' rights to establish and participate in civil society organisations in Palestine. This requires the immediate and complete abolition of the requirement to obtain a "security clearance" for registration in civil society organisations, as this has been used as a tool for political exclusion and constitutes a clear violation of Law No. (1) of 2000 Concerning Charitable Associations and Civil Society Organisations.
- Provide guidance to local banks on applying proportionate and risk-based assessments to civil society organisations, while ensuring compliance with applicable anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CFT) requirements and avoiding unnecessary de-risking or debanking of non-profit organisations. Bureaucratic and administrative practices that unnecessarily hinder civil society organisations' access to banking services should be addressed.
- Amend and revise Decree-Law No. (10) of 2018 on Cybercrime by removing vague and broadly interpreted terms such as "national security" and "public order", which have been used to block websites and prosecute activists and journalists, and ensure its compliance with international standards relating to freedom of expression. This should include ensuring that applicable cybercrime legislation and practices do not unduly restrict civil society organisations and digital rights in either the West Bank or the Gaza Strip.
- Expedite the adoption of a law on the right to access information, as such legislation constitutes an effective tool for enhancing transparency, participation, and public accountability.
- Adopt policies and procedures that strengthen transparency and participation by civil society through the adoption of a binding and publicly available policy framework regulating partnership and cooperation between the government and Palestinian civil society organisations in the formulation of public policies, participation in their

implementation, oversight of their execution, and accountability for the performance of public officials responsible for them.

- Ensure the protection of activists and whistleblowers, provide effective protection for human rights defenders, and hold accountable any authority or official that interferes in the work of official oversight institutions. The Government should also lift security and administrative restrictions on peaceful assemblies and civic movements and put an end to practices that suppress them.

To the De Facto Authorities in the Gaza Strip:

- Ensure that civil society organisations, particularly those responding to humanitarian needs, are able to access and assist affected communities, and refrain from imposing unnecessary restrictions on their activities.
- Promote transparency and openness in governance and public decision-making, and, where conditions permit and it can be done safely, provide meaningful opportunities for civil society organisations to contribute to discussions and decisions concerning governance, public services, and humanitarian priorities.
- Respect the rights of civil society organisations, activists, journalists, and human rights defenders and refrain from arbitrary restrictions, harassment, or measures that prevent them from carrying out their legitimate activities.

Refrain from imposing unnecessary security or administrative requirements that restrict the registration, establishment, or participation of individuals in civil society organisations, and ensure that such requirements do not impede legitimate civic participation.

To Palestinian Civil Society Organisations:

Palestinian civil society organisations should:

- First, adopt participatory approaches through the formation of coalitions and joint strategies that strengthen collective action and cooperation.
- Second, establish rapid response mechanisms to enable coordinated and solidarity-based action in cases of closures, arrests, and sudden sanctions imposed on certain civil society organisations either by the Palestinian authorities or by Israel as the occupying power.
- Third, provide rapid legal and financial support to civil society organisations subjected to harassment or restrictions that hinder their ability to operate and fulfil their role within Palestinian society.
- Fourth, strengthen public trust in the role of civil society organisations.
- Fifth, develop alternative funding strategies by diversifying funding sources and increasing reliance on Arab and regional funding, rather than international funding, in light of the fluctuations affecting funding available to Palestine due to its unique and exceptional context.
- Sixth, enhance the digital security capacities of Palestinian civil society organisations, strengthen documentation policies and preservation practices on social media platforms in response to the targeting of Palestinian content, and work collectively to develop alternative platforms and dissemination mechanisms that are less vulnerable to censorship.

To Donors and the International Community:

International organisations, institutions, and donors should:

- First, exert pressure on Israel, as the occupying power, to lift the restrictions imposed on Palestinian civil society organisations.
- Second, encourage Western governments to proactively develop and adopt mechanisms for responding to abusive or arbitrary sanctions targeting Palestinian human rights organisations, including, where appropriate, measures to mitigate or limit their implementation and impact within their jurisdictions.
- Third, provide long-term, predictable, and accessible funding for Palestinian civil society organisations in order to strengthen the enabling environment for civil society. Donors should also reduce rigid funding conditions and restrictive compliance requirements attached to funding programmes for Palestine, given the unique circumstances of Palestinian society, which continues to be subjected to hostile Israeli policies and practices that perpetuate conditions of emergency and protracted conflict, thereby undermining the rule of law.
- Fourth, proactively coordinate among donors to identify and maintain viable channels for ensuring that funding reaches Palestinian civil society organisations despite prevailing restrictions, financial barriers, and operational challenges.
- Fifth, contribute to the protection of digital rights by engaging with international actors, particularly major technology companies (Meta, Google, and Telegram), to encourage the adoption of transparent and fair policies regarding Palestinian content while ensuring that their content moderation policies and practices are not influenced by Israeli political and security pressures.
- Sixth, provide legal support to media and journalism organisations, particularly those working in cooperation with Palestinian civil society organisations, to enable them to confront content blocking, targeting campaigns, and deliberate internet disruptions, especially in the Gaza Strip.

To Private Sector Actors:

Private sector actors – particularly banks, financial institutions, and major technology platforms – should:

- First, apply proportionate and risk-based approaches when assessing Palestinian civil society organisations, while complying with applicable AML/CFT requirements and avoiding unnecessary de-risking, debanking, or restrictions on legitimate financial services.
- Second, adopt transparent, consistent, and accessible procedures for account opening, service provision, content moderation, and account restrictions, and provide effective mechanisms for organisations and individuals to challenge decisions that unjustifiably restrict their access to financial or digital services.

D) Research Process

Each principle encompasses various dimensions which are assessed and aggregated to provide quantitative scores per principle. These scores reflect the degree to which the environment within the country enables or disables the work of civil society. Scores are on a five-category scale defined as: fully disabling (1), disabling (2), partially enabling (3), enabling (4), and fully enabling (5). To complement the scores, this report provides a narrative analysis of the enabling or disabling environment for civil society, identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as offering recommendations. The process of drafting the analysis is led by Network Members; the consortium provides quality control and editorial oversight before publication.

For Principle 1 - which evaluates respect for and protection of freedom of association and peaceful assembly - the score integrates data from the CIVICUS Monitor. However, for Principles 2–6, the availability of yearly updated external quantitative indicators for the 86 countries part of the EUSEE programme are either limited or non-existent. To address this, Network Members convene a panel of representatives of civil society and experts once a year. This panel uses a set of guiding questions to assess the status of each principle and its dimensions within the country. **The panel for this report was convened in May 2026.** The discussions are supported by secondary sources, such as V-Dem, the Bertelsmann Stiftung Governance Index, the RTI Rating from the Centre for Law and Democracy, and other trusted resources. These sources provide benchmarks for measuring similar dimensions and are complemented by primary data collection and other secondary sources of information available for the country. Guided by these deliberations, the panel assigns scores for each dimension, which the Network Members submit to the Consortium, accompanied by detailed justifications that reflect the country's specific context. To determine a single score per principle, the scores assigned to each dimension are aggregated using a weighted average, reflecting the relative importance of each dimension within the principle. This approach balances diverse perspectives while maintaining a structured and objective evaluation framework.

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