

A blue-toned background illustration of a diverse crowd of people. Some individuals are holding up their phones to take pictures or videos, while others are looking towards the camera. The style is a soft, painterly illustration.

2024

**Lawyers for Justice
group
Annual Report**



Introduction

The “Lawyers for Justice Group” began its legal and human rights activities in 2011 as an individual initiative that emerged and developed in response to the increasing cases of human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories, at a time when the human rights system was facing escalating assaults due to the weakness of the legal framework and the absence of oversight on the performance of the Palestinian Executive Authority.

The group gradually crystallized its ideas as part of its efforts to organize its human rights work and named itself “Lawyers for Justice.” The group adopted its human rights discourse, which calls for respect for human rights and to not detract any of them. It emphasized the necessity of adhering to fair trial standards, where every detainee has the right to justice, regardless of the nature of the charges against them. In this context, it issued several legal positions urging the Palestinian Executive Authorities to put an end to all violations against the human rights system. In this regard, the group called for the cessation of all forms of detention that are not based on a sound legal foundation, specifically detentions carried out on the grounds of exercising freedom of opinion, political affiliation, and peaceful assembly, or those that contradict the freedom of the press and trade union activities.

Since its establishment, the group has taken upon itself the mission of monitoring and documenting human rights violations, considering the repeated wars and aggressions by the Occupational Israeli Forces against the Gaza Strip, in addition to the ongoing assaults in the occupied West Bank. The group has succeeded in highlighting these violations through legal advocacy before Palestinian courts to represent the victims of these violations, and to promote the advocacy for Palestinian rights in international forums. It has also worked to establish a network of human rights and legal activists to contribute to the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of Palestinian citizens.

This report highlights the role of the “Lawyers for Justice” group in documenting human rights violations in Palestine, covering the period from late 2023 to December 2024. It reviews the achievements of the group in promoting justice and protecting the rights of detainees. The report also addresses the challenges faced by the group in its work, the key accomplishments achieved during that period, and the significant impact the group has made at both the local and international levels in defending Palestinian human rights.

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First Chapter: The Strategic Activities of “Lawyers for Justice” in Promoting Human Rights

The “Lawyers for Justice” group seeks to promote justice and protect human rights through legal activities aim to support the rule of law, and combating violations against individuals, especially activists, journalists, teachers, human rights defenders, and university students. The group provides legal support to those affected by repressive policies by offering free legal consultations, judicial follow-up, and ensuring fair trials. The group’s activities include training and raising awareness about human rights. In addition to enhancing partnerships with independent international human rights organizations.

The group monitors and documents violations committed by security agencies and official bodies against individuals, where it collects evidence and testimonies accurately and systematically. This work aims to provide a clear picture of violations scale, and to put pressure on accountability of those responsible. The group goes beyond monitoring and documenting violations to conduct strong support and advocacy campaigns to raise awareness and highlight these violations at both local and international levels, this strengthens efforts to hold those responsible accountable and achieve justice for victims.

The Lawyers for Justice group aims to create a legal environment that respects human rights and believes in justice and equality for all individuals, especially in the face of legal and political challenges that threaten these rights, through the activities below:

First: Providing Legal Support and Protecting Human Rights

Lawyers for Justice group seeks to provide legal support and empowerment, to those affected through a range of core activities focused on protecting fundamental rights. This includes providing legal representation for individuals before the Public Prosecution and the Palestinian courts, where team works to ensure they receive a fair trial in accordance with the highest legal standards. These activities also include documenting human rights violations, monitoring repressive practices, and providing comprehensive legal advice to detainees and affected citizens.

As part of these activities, the group – Lawyers for Justice – focuses on raising awareness among detainees of their legal rights, from the moment of arrest until their release, to ensure they receive fair legal treatment throughout their detention in accordance with fair trial standards. It also works to train individuals on how to protect their legal rights in the face of any illegal or repressive practices.

In addition, the group is active in promoting legal awareness across society, by disseminating legal information and offering training workshops aim to empower individuals to access justice. The team works to ensure the dissemination of legal knowledge among various groups, thus enhancing individuals' ability to defend their rights. This includes close cooperation and building partnerships with local and international human rights organizations with the aim of building a comprehensive legal support network and enhancing the effectiveness of lobbying to ensure respect for human rights. Among these partnerships that the "Lawyers for Justice" group has succeeded in achieving are:

Partnership with the National Commission for the Independence of Judiciary and Rule of Law – ISTIQLAL

In 2023, Lawyers for Justice Group signed a memorandum of partnership with the Civil Commission for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Rule of Law – Istiqlal. Through this partnership, the group represented human rights cases and provided the necessary legal assistance to those cases, including human rights defenders, activists, journalists, teachers, and university students. The support of the commission provided financial support to the group to provide free legal consultations to humanitarian cases subjected to violations. Also, the group was able to provide 95 free legal consultations to human rights defenders and others who were subjected to direct violations by the executive bodies of the Palestinian Authority or through incitement against them via social media.

Partnership with the Legal Clinic at Birzeit University

In the same year, Lawyers for Justice signed a memorandum of understanding with the Legal Clinic at Birzeit University, a partnership that continues until now. This partnership aims to develop the capabilities of students at the Legal Clinic by engaging them in the group's legal activities, helping to develop their practical skills in the field of human rights. The Legal Clinic also collaborated with the group in preparing a legal report on "Decree-Law No. 10 of 2018 on Cybercrimes" and the violations that human rights defenders are subjected to because of its implementation.

Partnership with the European Union

"Lawyers for Justice" group has implemented a joint project with the European Union aimed at submitting monthly reports on the human rights and judicial situation in the occupied West Bank. This project

documents violations against human rights defenders, such as political arrests and arrests related to trade union activities, as well as the targeting of marginalized groups in society, such as the persecution and harassment of women related to their human rights activism. The reports also include comprehensive information on summonses issued by security forces against students and journalists, violations against civil society organizations and activists, and cases of violations of fair trial guarantees.

The project aims to raise international awareness of these violations by providing accurate and reliable data, thereby strengthening local and international advocacy and pressuring responsible parties to curb these violations. Thanks to this partnership, “Lawyers for Justice” group has been able to issue urgent appeals and activate international mechanisms to prosecute human rights violations, contributing to efforts to provide legal and human rights protection for human rights defenders.

Especially after the State of Palestine’s ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against torture as part of its domestic legal system, we are examining the extent of the authorities’ commitment to the standards contained in these agreements.

Partnership with the Swiss Representative Office

Lawyers for Justice Group implemented a joint project with the Swiss Representative Office in Ramallah, titled “Promoting Digital Rights: Protecting Freedom of Expression in Palestine.” This project came in the context of the State of Palestine’s issuance of the Cybercrime Law,

pursuant to Law by Decree No. 10 of 2018, which aims to regulate online activities and prosecute cybercrimes. However, this legislation has raised significant concerns about its potential impact on fundamental human rights, particularly the right to freedom of expression. This is due to its vague provisions that lack clear definitions, allowing the authorities to censor online content and impose harsh penalties on expressions deemed critical of the authorities, in addition to restricting the scope of exercising constitutional rights guaranteed under the Palestinian Basic Law.

In this context, the group formed an advisory committee to review Decree-Law No. 10 of 2018. The committee included civil society organizations and activists and adopted a position rejecting the exploitation of the aforementioned law to restrict freedom of opinion and expression. At the same time, it emphasized the importance of reviewing the law and adopting proposals and positions that reconcile the need to enact a law that combats cybercrimes while simultaneously protecting fundamental rights and freedoms and rejecting any legal provisions that could be used to limit or suppress freedom of expression. The committee also made numerous proposals and observations to limit the use of the law against political opponents, trade union activists, and journalists, particularly when these laws are used against human rights defenders. This is in addition to emphasizing that Decree-Law No. 10 of 2018 replaced Decree-Law No. 16 of 2017 after it received widespread criticism, which ignored the observations expressed by civil society institutions at the time. The current Law No. 10 of 2018 was repeatedly issued without introducing substantive amendments to the repealed law.

The group also emphasized that the goal of its project is to address the shortcomings of this law and its implementation, by monitoring and documenting violations resulting from it, and submitting a comprehensive report that contributes to its improvement, rather than simply objecting to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. This project aims to respect the human rights framework and restrict the expansion of criminalization of legitimate acts within the framework of exercising freedom of opinion and expression, including the broad terminology it includes that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Recently, in response to these ongoing concerns, the Palestinian government took an important step by forming a special committee during the Cabinet session on April 23, 2024. This committee, chaired by the Minister of Justice and including representatives from government sectors and civil society, was tasked with reviewing Decree-Law No. 10 of 2018. The group proposed a project to establish a “shadow committee.” This committee would continue to work in collaboration with the government ministerial committee and provide an independent civil society perspective to enrich the committee’s deliberations. The shadow committee would provide expert analysis, policy recommendations, and independent position papers, which would be shared with the Palestinian government to support its review process. To this end, the group held a meeting with the Minister of Justice, who was designated by the Cabinet to chair the ministerial committee, and the position papers were also submitted to the sponsor of the aforementioned project to obtain feedback on the proposed recommendations.

Through this partnership, the group seeks to ensure that cybercrime legislation is consistent with international human rights standards, and to strike a balance between combating cybercrime and protecting fundamental freedoms, to ensure that Palestine remains committed to the fundamental human rights values guaranteed by international conventions and agreements.

The Lawyers for Justice Group has monitored (47) cases of arrests related to the implementation of Law No. 10 of 2018 on Cybercrimes, which violates the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Many individuals have been subjected to these violations, including human rights defenders, journalists, teachers, university students, and union activists. The group has followed up on these legal cases, provided the necessary support to those affected to guarantee their rights and freedoms, and worked to provide legal representation in the trials of these individuals.



Second: Providing legal advice and judicial follow-up: Supporting victims of violations and attending important cases.

Lawyers for Justice group is committed to providing free legal consultations to individuals whose rights have been violated, either directly with the victims or through their families. The group's legal team works to guide families toward the correct legal path, clarify their rights, and provide necessary support, particularly in cases where they are detained in detention centers and are denied early representation. In addition, the group continues to closely monitor important judicial cases as part of its ongoing monitoring of justice. Prominent among these cases are the assassination of political activist Nizar Banat and the killing of female citizen "Sh. B." by a security officer. The group pays great attention to attending all related court sessions, which are still ongoing at the time of writing this report. The group also continues to monitor other important cases, such as the prosecution of activists against telecommunications companies, to achieve justice and protect the rights of individuals facing violations against them.

Moreover, to the legal consultations provided by the Lawyers for Justice Group, as part of its partnership with the National Commission for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Rule of Law (Is-

tiqlal), the group provides between 10 and 12 legal consultations per month. These consultations cover sensitive human rights issues such as political detentions related to freedom of opinion, expression, and peaceful assembly, as well as arbitrary measures against participation in union activities and union work. Consultations also focus on the prosecution of journalists for practicing their profession, the prosecution of university students for their union activities, and the violation of teachers' rights due to their participation in union activities. Legal consultations are also provided to individuals who face discrimination based on disability.

These cases include:

- **Case [H.K.]:** who suffers from a partial visual impairment, applied for a schoolteacher position at the Ministry of Education in March 2024. After successfully passing the written exam, he was invited for a personal interview in July 2024. However, after the committee learned of his disability, his file was marked as unfit for the job, which led to him being denied a second interview without being informed of the reason. Despite H.K. submitting all the documents and medical examinations proving his condition, his disability was inaccurately listed in his records at 90%. In August 2024, he was informed that the Ministry does not hire people with visual impairments, which constitutes blatant discrimination.

The Lawyers for Justice Group provided him with legal advice, explaining his legal rights to appeal the decision before the Administrative Court. The court found that the decision violates the Palestinian Basic Law and the 1999 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Mr. K.H. was instructed to appeal the decision to ensure he maintains his rights and is protected from discrimination.

- **Legal Representation and Judicial Follow-up**

In addition to the legal consultations provided by the Lawyers for Justice Group, the group provides legal representation for individuals arrested on grounds of freedom of opinion, expression, and peaceful assembly, as well as for individuals arrested because of their participation in trade union or professional activities. The group's legal team follows up on these cases before courts and public prosecution offices, with the goal of ensuring justice and protecting individuals' rights against charges or arbitrary measures.

The group seeks to provide strong legal representation before judicial authorities, with a focus on ensuring fair trials and the application of international legal standards in the trials of its clients. This includes attending court sessions, providing defense counsel for defendants, and working to secure their release if the charges are based on unsound legal grounds. It also works to activate strategic litigation mechanisms to reduce violations of detainees' rights, particularly about the early representation they are denied. The group focuses on ensuring that detainees are not subjected to physical assault or torture while in detention. It is committed to providing legal defense to ensure that these individuals are treated in accordance with international human rights standards. This includes attending court sessions, following legal proceedings, and working to ensure that they are not subjected to any illegal practices or violations of their fundamental rights. Through this representation, Lawyers for Justice seeks to provide the necessary legal protection and pressure for their release if the charges against them are unjustified, reflecting the group's unwavering commitment to defending and protecting human rights. In providing legal support and representation, the group also strives to continue monitoring litigation procedures and ensuring clients receive fair trial guarantees. During 2024, the group followed up on dozens of cases before Pal-

estinian prosecution offices and courts, all of which relate to the suppression of constitutional rights.

- **The group is following the trial sessions of the defendants in the assassination of political activist Nizar Banat.**

The Lawyers for Justice group is continuously following the trial proceedings in the case of the murder of political and human rights activist Nizar Banat. The first session began on September 7, 2021, and continues to this day. Another trial session was held on November 17, 2024, but was postponed allowing the defense attorney to complete the evidence. The next session was postponed until December 1, 2024, due to the events in Tulkarm, including the Israeli occupation forces' invasion of the city, which prevented the lawyer from reaching the court in Ramallah. The sessions were subsequently administratively postponed until April 6, 2025.



Continuous Postponements and Demands for Justice - The group

notes that the judicial proceedings in this case have taken more than three and a half years and are still in the defense evidence presentation phase. There have also been repeated postponements over five sessions to bring in a defense witness for the accused. In this context, the Lawyers for Justice Group emphasizes the need to respect fair trial guarantees and the importance of expeditious adjudication of criminal cases to ensure justice and accountability. The group calls on the Palestinian judiciary to continue its determined work to achieve the desired justice in this case, which touches on the principles and values of justice and the rule of law, especially since it is a matter of public opinion and significantly impacts citizens' confidence in the Palestinian judicial system.

• The group is following up on the murder case of young woman S. B.

The Lawyers for Justice group is following up on the murder case of the young woman, S. B., who was killed on October 19, 2023, by a General Intelligence Service officer. The accused officer was arrested and detained, and then brought before a military court, where trial proceedings began. Most of the sessions held involved the Military Public Prosecution presenting its evidence and the testimony of prosecution witnesses regarding the crime.

Postponements and Continuation of Trial - The last trial session was held on February 10, 2025, and was postponed until March 2, 2025. The group emphasizes the importance of expediting trial procedures in these types of cases, as they relate to the lives of citizens, to ensure justice and deterrence for anyone seeking to commit crimes or escape punishment. The legal team at the Lawyers for Justice Group reiterates its support for the families of the victims and the Palestinian community, emphasizing the need to hold all parties responsible for these crimes accountable, regardless of their positions or authority.



Third: Monitoring the Executive Authority's Commitment to Implementing the Convention Against Torture

Lawyers for Justice Group views with great interest the State of Palestine's accession to the Convention against Torture in 2023. This convention was considered part of the Palestinian legal system after the issuance of Decree-Law No. 25 of 2023 by the Head of the Executive Authority and its publication in the Official Gazette. Despite this important step, monitoring the Palestinian situation raises questions about the executive authority's seriousness in adhering to the contents of this convention, a fact reflected on the ground.

The Convention against Torture complements the provisions of the Palestinian Basic Law, which clearly criminalizes torture in several provisions and emphasizes the sanctity of this act in all applicable Palestinian legislation, including penal codes. However, it is noted that torture and/or ill-treatment in prisons and detention centers affiliated with the Palestinian security services continues to be practiced in many cases, whether publicly disclosed or those that remain secret under the pressure of threats to which victims are exposed. The year 2024 witnessed a notable return to the use of torture and ill-treatment, both physical and psychological, in Palestinian detention cen-

ters, with (83) documented cases of torture being reported without public announcement, for fear of continued security prosecutions against detainees. In this context, the need to examine the reasons that lead to the continuation of this approach emerges, at a time when the Convention against Torture was expected to constitute a key tool to curb these practices.

One of the most significant reasons preventing the reduction of torture in detention centers run by the executive branch is the lack of accountability. Victims suffer from official judicial authorities ignoring torture complaints and failing to seriously address cases alleging torture and ill-treatment. This leads to the continuation of these violations without any accountability for the individuals responsible. It is worth noting that many cases in which complaints have been filed receive no real response, reflecting the judicial system's failure to provide justice and protect individuals from torture and ill-treatment.

The group emphasizes the increase in torture cases, particularly following the security campaign launched by the Joint Security Committee against the city of Jenin and its camp in early December 2024, which resulted in hundreds of detainees. In this context, the status of many detainees remained unknown regarding the torture they were subjected to during their arrest and detention. Security forces photographed them and deliberately disseminated their images to the media, depicting them in humiliating and inhumane conditions. This in turn creates a state of fear and dread for anyone attempting to exercise any form of freedom of opinion and expression, or to exercise guaranteed constitutional rights, for fear of being subjected to violence and persecution. This reflects a gross and clear violation of human rights.

Lawyers for Justice group believes that the persistence of these violations, particularly torture and/or ill-treatment, is primarily due to the lack of accountability and effective mechanisms to hold those responsible accountable. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen independent oversight mechanisms for detention centers, ensure serious investigations into torture cases by independent bodies, and refer those involved in torture and ill-treatment for investigation and trial. The Palestinian Authority must also effectively implement its obligations under the Convention against Torture, work to enforce laws protecting the rights of detainees and preventing them from being subjected to any form of torture and/or ill-treatment and ensure the prosecution of those responsible for these violations.



Fourth: Community Movements and Their Legal Follow-Up

Over the past few years, the public situation in Palestine has witnessed a widespread proliferation of so-called community movements aimed at combating corruption and demanding rights. Among these important movements and cases that the Lawyers for Justice Group has followed and provided legal assistance and support to are the teachers' movement, the "Enough, Telecom Companies" movement, the movement of people with disabilities, and others.

- **The "Enough Telecom" movement**

The "Enough Telecom" movement embodies human rights and legal challenges related to freedom of expression, demands for social and economic rights, and consumer protection. Lawyers for Justice group has been following this movement since its launch in 2017 and continues to monitor its development. The case focuses on the trial of a group of activists who called for a reduction in high telecom service prices in Palestine, as part of demands aimed at protecting consumer rights. On November 7, 2024, the last trial session of the activists

(Jihad Abdo, Izz al-Din Za'oul, and Musa al-Qaisi) was held at the Ramallah Magistrate's Court. These activists are accused of defamation based on a complaint filed by the Palestinian Telecommunications Company (Paltel), because of their social and union activism demanding price reductions and ensuring compliance with consumer protection laws and regulations.

To complete the trial proceedings against the defendants in this case, the Ramallah Magistrate's Court approved, on April 18, 2024, the defense attorney's request to summon witnesses, including the chairman of the board of directors of the Palestinian Telecommunications Company. This was despite having previously withdrawn the request of the attorney for the complainant (the telecommunications company), who claimed that summoning witnesses was intended to delay and stall the progress of the case.

This session is considered a continuation of the previous session, where the judge was enabled to review the "evidence limitation" memorandum related to the defense testimonies that the defendants intend to submit, in the context of strengthening their defense position before the court. It is worth noting that the Ramallah Magistrate's Court had approved on April 18, 2024, the summoning of defense witnesses, including the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Palestinian Telecommunications Company. However, the court reversed this decision in the session of June 30, 2024, based on a request from the attorney of the complainant (the telecommunications company), who claimed that summoning witnesses was intended to delay and stall the progress of the case.

The Lawyers for Justice Group expresses deep concern about any future decision issued under the influence of the company that prevents the summoning of witnesses, which would negatively impact trial guarantees and a fair trial. In this context, the group emphasizes

es the important role of civil society organizations and individuals in monitoring the trial to ensure that all legal safeguards are available to activists and that the right to defense is not diminished.

Noting that this session is the first session for the defense to present its defense evidence in the case that has been pending since 2020. It took more than four years to present the evidence of the Public Prosecution and the complainant, which the group considers a blatant violation of fair trial guarantees, in addition to the unfair procrastination of the case against the rights of the accused. The group believes that this case is a real test of the justice system in Palestine in light of protecting the rights of individuals to express their opinions and demand their social rights guaranteed by the Palestinian Basic Law and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which was approved as part of the system of national laws that guarantee and protect economic and social rights under Decree-Law No. (23) of 2023 to publish the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

• **Teachers' Movement**

The executive authority's apparatuses continue their repressive practices targeting union activity in the occupied West Bank, in clear violation of the Palestinian Basic Law, which provides constitutional protection for this right, ensuring its non-infringement. However, this has not provided effective protection for the unified teachers' movement, which was launched to demand the preservation of teachers' rights and to demand their rights in the occupied West Bank. The group points to the efforts made by the executive authority to obstruct the formation of an independent teachers' union, including the Ministry of Labor's refusal to facilitate the necessary license to form the union in 2016 and the early retirement of some teachers to obstruct the formation of an elected teachers' union.

In light of this, the Unified Teachers' Movement began to embrace the teachers' union demands and began to have a clear impact on their ranks. However, the executive authority attempted to thwart this movement, launching a campaign of summonses and arrests against some teachers based on their union activity. The Ministry of Education also carried out arbitrary transfers, including hundreds of teachers, and imposed punitive financial deductions on many others. Several teachers were also referred to early retirement.

The Lawyers for Justice Group has been monitoring the teachers' movement since its inception and continues to provide legal support and assistance. The group provides free legal advice to numerous teachers who have been subjected to attacks, violations, and disciplinary sanctions, such as summonses, arrests, transfers, retirement, or salary deductions.



Fifth: Urgent intervention in the formation of a public sector employees' union

The Palestinian Basic Law constitutes the constitutional basis for union activity in Palestine, as it guarantees the right to organize unions in accordance with Article 25 of the law. Despite the absence of a specific law regulating union activity, new laws have been issued affirming the right to organize and establish unions. These include Decree-Law No. 18 of 2023 regarding the publication of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, issued on July 16, 2023, and Decree-Law No. 23 of 2023 regarding the publication of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, issued on August 16, 2023.

Since the Palestinian Authority's accession to the two international covenants in 2014, this accession has been strengthened by the enactment of laws that consider the covenants part of the national legal system regulating public rights and freedoms, particularly the right to form unions and practice union activity freely and without any restrictions. To ensure that the State of Palestine's accession to the two international covenants does not remain a mere formality that contra-

dicts practical reality, the formation and organization of unions must be considered within the modern concepts established by the Palestinian Basic Law and approved national laws, which were approved by the head of the executive authority in a state of necessity due to the continued absence of the legislative authority from carrying out its legislative work. This must be consistent with the legal framework that guarantees the effective regulation and protection of this right.

- **Efforts to form a public sector employees' union**

Efforts have continued since 2023 to form a union for Palestinian public sector workers following the dissolution of the Public Employees' Union in 2014. Despite the founding committee's fulfillment of the legal requirements and the submission of its papers to the Ministry of Labor, the request was rejected in May 2023, leading to a continued union vacuum in the public sector. Despite the absence of a detailed law regulating union activity, the Ministry of Labor gradually received union formation requests. However, after a year of submitting the papers and ignoring the founding committee's observations, the request remained pending. Considering this rejection, the founding committee organized peaceful protests, but they were met with threats and penalties against participants, in addition to harassment and incitement from executive authorities, with some members being arrested and transferred for disciplinary reasons.

In its side, the Lawyers for Justice Group considers union activity a constitutional right and supports the founding committee's efforts by providing legal support and assistance in litigation. The group seeks to submit legal memoranda to the Ministry of Labor clarifying the legal basis for union representation based on the Palestinian Authority's accession to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with the aim of expediting recognition of the union's

establishment. It also provides legal consultations to members of the founding committee to clarify the necessary legal procedures in the event of continued refusal by the ministry.

Furthermore, the group provides legal representation before official bodies if members are arrested or assaulted by executive authorities due to their union activities. It also represents them before the Administrative Court if the Ministry continues to refuse to accredit the union and grants it permission to open a bank account, which is an essential step for the union to begin its work. It also provides legal support if any member of the founding committee is subjected to threats or arrests due to their union activities and organizes specialized training in union work in accordance with Palestinian law and relevant international agreements.

The group also works to strengthen the establishment of the union through its support and advocacy, by engaging local and international human rights organizations to support the establishment of a public sector employees union. The group aims to draft a memorandum of understanding with the founding committee to identify the needs of members and develop working mechanisms to achieve the goal of establishment in a safe human rights environment, ensuring the building of human rights capabilities within the union that balances its objectives with the interests of the public service. The group continues to provide legal support to ensure the establishment of an independent union that reflects the rights of Palestinian public sector employees.

The strategic activities of the Lawyers for Justice Group represent a fundamental pillar in promoting and protecting human rights, effectively contributing to addressing the legal, social, and political challenges facing individuals from various groups when exercising their rights, as guaranteed by national law and stipulated by international conventions. Through these efforts, the group seeks to create a positive impact on society and promote the principle of justice. In the following section, we will highlight the group's achievements and results in its legal and professional journey during 2024, in addition to its role in exerting all possible efforts to provide legal assistance to those affected by the occupation's attacks in the cities of the occupied West Bank.



Second Chapter: Achievements and Results: A Legal and Professional Journey in the Face of Challenges

The genocidal war waged by the Israeli occupation state against the Gaza Strip in the final months of 2023, and which continues to this day, constituted a critical phase in terms of the challenges and violations faced by the Palestinian people amid the ongoing military escalation by the occupation forces. In this context, numerous human rights organizations, including Lawyers for Justice, played an important role in documenting these violations and their repercussions at various levels. Through these legal efforts, the group sought to shed light on the human rights violations facing the Palestinian people and to provide legal support to the Palestinian community in times of war.



First: Monitoring Human Rights Violations in Palestinian Cities and Camps During the War

Human rights violations escalated in Palestinian cities and camps during the war on the Gaza Strip. While the military escalation in Gaza continued, the Israeli occupation continued its practices against Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank, such as arbitrary arrests, house raids, restrictions on freedom of movement, and the destruction of infrastructure in cities and camps. These violations were not limited to the Israeli occupation alone; they also included the repressive military campaign launched by the Palestinian Authority forces in the Jenin camp under the slogan “Protecting the Homeland,” which resulted in violations of the right to life and basic human rights, resulting in the killing of 13 Palestinian citizens.

The right to freedom of opinion and expression has also been suppressed, with peaceful demonstrations held in various cities in the occupied West Bank to denounce the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip being targeted. This has resulted in arbitrary arrests and physical assaults on demonstrators, including men, women, and even children, in flagrant violation of international laws guaranteeing fundamental human rights and a violation of all boundaries and social values.

- **Violation of the rights of citizens and detainees during the Palestinian Authority's "Homeland Protection" campaign against Jenin camp**

On December 14, 2024, Palestinian security forces launched the "Homeland Protection" campaign in the city of Jenin and its camp, aiming to regain control of the camp from "outlaws," according to the official statement. The campaign resulted in numerous arrests of individuals not involved in aggressive practices, and numerous legal and human rights violations were documented. In this context, Lawyers for Justice has monitored several documented cases of arrests under suspicious circumstances. The charges against them ranged from "possession of an unlicensed weapon" to accusations related to social media posts or family ties with individuals the Palestinian Authority security services consider wanted.

During the campaign, the group observed serious violations of detainees' basic rights, including the lack of fair trial guarantees. Many detainees were held for extended periods without trial or identification of their places of detention, preventing lawyers and detainees' families from accessing them. Furthermore, cases were documented in which detainees were subjected to torture and ill-treatment during interrogation, as well as the illegal transfer of detainees to other cities such as Salfit, Nablus, and Ramallah, reflecting a disregard for their legal rights. Degrading photos and videos of detainees were also published on the media for the purpose of incitement and intimidation, in violation of their human dignity, in addition to the use of torture and/or ill-treatment.

Lawyers for Justice group continues to demand an end to arbitrary detention and the implementation of court decisions regarding the release of detainees. It also calls on the Palestinian authorities to immediately investigate violations committed against detainees, particularly torture and ill-treatment. Furthermore, the group calls for

adherence to international human rights agreements ratified by the State of Palestine, most notably the Convention against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The group considers the “Homeland Protection” security campaign a flagrant violation of human rights. Immediate measures must be taken to guarantee and protect the rights of detainees, while ensuring a fair trial in accordance with international standards.

The group also believes it is important to pursue and hold accountable those involved in the murders that resulted in approximately six deaths during the aforementioned campaign, as well as the conversion of citizens’ homes into military barracks after the residents were expelled.

- **Suppression of peaceful demonstrations in solidarity with the residents of the Gaza Strip due to the ongoing war**

In late 2023 and throughout 2024, Palestinian security forces restricted and banned peaceful popular activities and demonstrations that took place in several Palestinian cities, in an attempt to mitigate the worsening situation and its potential repercussions. These demonstrations targeted peaceful protests attended by a large number of citizens who expressed their condemnation of the genocidal war perpetrated by the occupying state of Israel against the people of the Gaza Strip. However, these demonstrations were met with repressive measures that contravene the right to peaceful assembly, guaranteed by international human rights conventions, most notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to peaceful demonstration as a fundamental part of freedom of expression, as stipulated in Article 19 of the Palestinian Basic Law.

The repression exercised by the security forces included the use of tear gas and live ammunition in some cases. Demonstrators were also

forcibly dispersed, leading to clashes in some locations between the PA security forces and the demonstrators. The security forces continued to use force to disperse other demonstrations in Ramallah and Jenin, where live ammunition was fired at demonstrators who were protesting against Israeli practices in the Gaza Strip, demanding an end to the war, and criticizing the Palestinian Authority's policies toward the Gaza Strip.

- **Violation of the Right to Life**

Serious violations committed by Palestinian security forces against citizens have escalated in various cities and governorates. The Lawyers for Justice Group documented a series of serious crimes targeting the right to life, resulting in the deaths of at least thirteen citizens, in addition to the injury of others as a result of the violent suppression of peaceful demonstrations in support of Gaza and its people, or because of indiscriminate and unjustified gunfire during unlawful arrests carried out without judicial warrants.

Despite the passing of more than a year since these violations, the continued failure to open serious and transparent criminal investigations reflects a shocking failure to ensure justice. The absence of accountability and sanctions for those responsible for and complicit in these crimes reinforces the culture of impunity and threatens to undermine the rule of law. This situation represents a dangerous decline in respect for human rights and opens the door to the continuation of these violations without deterrence, which imposes an urgent need for genuine action to ensure accountability and achieve justice.

However, the violation of the right to life was not limited to civilian victims only but extended to include members of the security services as well, as three security personnel were killed during the armed clashes that took place in the occupied West Bank during the recent period.

The killing of these individuals as a result of the violent escalation reflects a serious deterioration in the application of law and the rule of justice. These victims were part of the Palestinian security institutions, and this in no way justifies the violation of their right to life or the use of excessive force against them. Their killing represents a blatant violation of the right to life, which must be protected by law regardless of the circumstances. These incidents underscore the urgent need for transparent and independent investigations to determine responsibilities and hold accountable all those involved in these violations, thus restoring respect for the principles of justice and the rule of law.

• **Attacks on Journalists and Media Freedoms**

Lawyers for Justice Group is following with deep concern the systematic escalation campaign waged by Palestinian Authority security forces against media rights and freedoms since the beginning of December 2024. This campaign coincided with the security campaign in Jenin refugee camp. The campaign focused on journalists, including journalists L.J. and Mohammed al-Atrash from Al Jazeera, who were subjected to incitement from pages loyal to the security services. Journalist L.J. was also physically assaulted and arrested while carrying out his journalistic work in Tulkarm. In early 2025, the Attorney General issued a decision to completely ban Al Jazeera's activities in the occupied West Bank. This decision was upheld by the Ramallah Magistrate's Court, which deemed the channel and its websites a threat to national security and incitement to commit crimes.

In addition, the group also documented the arrest of journalists S.Kh., M.M., and S.S.H for their journalistic work, as well as the detention of journalist A.A. by the Preventive Security Service in Nablus. The group also monitored the assault and arrest of several journalists during 2024, including 10 journalists since the beginning of the year,

in addition to five journalists who were arrested or assaulted since the beginning of December 2024.

An escalation in prosecutions and arrests of journalists has also been noted, with some of them summoned for investigation by the Palestinian security services, including the Preventive Security and General Intelligence Services. The Lawyers for Justice Group believes that the continuation of this systematic campaign constitutes a violation of the Palestinian Basic Law and Law No. (9) of 1995 regarding press and publications, as well as a clear violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The group calls for an end to the prosecution of journalists and their summoning for investigation based on their journalistic work, the cancellation of the decision to ban Al Jazeera, and the guarantee of freedom of the press without restrictions.

Second: Exceptional Efforts to Protect Human Rights and Document Violations During the War

In addition to the core work undertaken by the Lawyers for Justice Group to protect and defend human rights, during the first months of the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, the group made exceptional efforts to document violations and protect human rights. The group focused on documenting Israeli crimes and settlement practices in the occupied West Bank, documenting ongoing settler attacks against Palestinians, including physical assaults, property destruction, and population displacement. The group also documented attacks on Bedouin communities in areas threatened by settlement expansion, observing forced displacement, home demolitions, and the targeting of agricultural land in the Jordan Valley. It also documented the severe pressure exerted by the occupation authorities on Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. The group visited Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons to check on their physical and psychological health, and document the violations they suffered, such as torture, starvation, and ill-treatment. The group used the evidence and testimonies it collected to pressure the international community by submitting reports to local and international human rights organizations and institutions, with the aim of increasing support and advocacy for Palestinian rights.

After reviewing the achievements by the group in its legal and professional career, we find that these accomplishments did not come without facing different challenges. Despite the important role the group plays in defending human rights, it has been subjected to numerous attempts at incitement against it. In the following section, we will discuss the challenges and obstacles the group faced as a result of these incitement campaigns, and how these attempts have impacted its work and efforts to achieve justice and protect rights.

Third Chapter: Incitement against the Lawyers for Justice Group: Challenges and Obstacles

The Lawyers for Justice Group has been subjected to continuous and persistent incitement since the beginning of its human rights advocacy. The levels of this incitement have varied over the years, with the group experiencing periods of decline and periods of significant increase. This is closely linked to the human rights situation in Palestinian cities and their political and economic circumstances. Although this incitement has fluctuated, the group has been able to document numerous cases in recent years. In particular, in 2024, the group observed a significant increase in the level of incitement against it. This incitement takes various forms, varying in intensity and method of implementation, and has had an impact on the group's work and activities.

The group faces significant challenges in its human rights and humanitarian work, particularly considering the complex political and legal circumstances surrounding the Palestinian struggle. Since its founding, the group has been the target of a number of incitement campaigns aimed at undermining its work, tarnishing its reputation, and hindering its efforts to defend human rights and protect fundamental freedoms. These campaigns, which come from various parties, range from media attacks and incitement against the group's members, to political and legal pressures aimed at restricting its ability to carry out its work freely and safely.

The incitement against the group has been associated with varying degrees of hate speech and violence emanating from numerous government figures, particularly against the group. This has been followed by organized campaigns to marginalize the group's work and incite against its work, in order to prevent the monitoring of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms committed by executive authorities.

The ongoing incitement against the group is not merely a theoretical threat but rather reflects a systematic attempt to destroy any human rights force that seeks to expose violations and repressive practices affecting human rights throughout the occupied West Bank. Various social media platforms are being exploited to launch organized attacks against the group and its members, including lawyers, human rights activists, and researchers. These attacks often use misleading methods and false accusations to distort the facts and conceal the violations monitored by the group.

Adding to attacks on digital platforms, the group's members face real threats from official authorities and security agencies, which seek to limit their ability to carry out their legal and humanitarian missions and obstruct their work. These challenges require a decisive stance to protect freedom of expression and the independence of human rights organizations.

These obstacles and challenges are not limited to what the group is exposed to at the hands of the Palestinian Authority's executive bodies. There are also additional obstacles resulting from the occupation. Lawyer Diala Ayeshe, an active member of the group, was arrested by Israeli occupation forces on January 17, 2024, while passing through a military checkpoint. She was arrested without any charges and placed in administrative detention. She was also prevented from communicating with her lawyer or family and was assaulted and threatened by soldiers during her arrest. She remained in detention without any right to communicate with her lawyer. It is worth noting that lawyer Diala received the Index on Censorship - Freedom of Expression Award in London in recognition of her outstanding efforts in defending human rights.

Challenges and Obstacles Facing the Lawyers for Justice Group:

1. Distortion and Incitement: Ongoing incitement campaigns aim to spread misleading news, by disseminating false information and attempting to distort its role. These attacks are directed at restricting the group's work, which exposes the repressive practices and ongoing human rights violations against Palestinian journalists, activists, university students, teachers, human rights defenders, women, men, and children. The group has monitored dozens of cases of incitement on social media, including defamation, death threats, intimidation, and accusations of treason.

In addition to the ongoing incitement against the group inside detention centers, the group has documented dozens of cases in which detained detainees are being incited to isolate the group and/or the group's lawyers from legal prosecution and representation before Palestinian prosecution offices and courts. This has even reached the point of engaging detainees in bargaining chips to isolate the group in exchange for their release.

2. Threats of Assault and Murder: Lawyers for Justice has received numerous threats of assault and murder, the most recent of which occurred in May 2024, when lawyer Mohannad Karajah, the group's director, was threatened with death on social media by groups linked to the Palestinian security agencies. These threats constitute an attack on human rights and the freedom to practice law.

The group demanded immediate action to protect Lawyer Karajah and ensure his safety. It affirmed its determination to continue its work in the service of justice and human rights, and to not back down in the face of any threats aimed at silencing its voice

or restricting its freedom to practice its profession freely and impartially. Lawyer Karajah filed a formal complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office on June 11, 2024, regarding these threats. However, the Public Prosecution has not taken any action on the complaint to date. Accordingly, the group submitted a complaint to the Ministry of Interior, outlining the threats, incitement, and defamation Lawyer Karajah is subjected to via digital platforms. It also submitted a complaint to the Public Prosecution, which has not yet received any action. Despite this, the Ministry of Interior has not taken any action, and the group has not received any response to date.

1. Surveillance and Tracking: The group has observed numerous cyberattacks targeting its members, including attempts to hack and compromise online accounts. The group also confirms that it has been subjected to significant electronic tracking and direct monitoring by security personnel and civilian users. In this context, instances of the group being monitored by security personnel on multiple occasions have been documented.
2. Improper Treatment in Security Centers: Lawyers for Justice Group lawyers were subjected to improper treatment by police officers inside detention centers while performing their legal work. They were sometimes denied the ability to carry out their duties normally, including being prevented from communicating with their clients or having their legal proceedings unjustifiably delayed. The group's lawyers were also denied access to some detention centers, particularly by the Intelligence, Preventive Security and the Joint Committee. The group was also denied access to the locations of detainees it was monitoring, and the security services lacked a mechanism to facilitate the identification of places of detention and arrest. In other cases, lawyers were subjected to insults

or threats while entering or staying in detention centers. These actions threaten the independence of lawyers and their right to perform their duties efficiently and constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of defense guaranteed by the Palestinian Basic Law, international conventions, and domestic laws.

3. Refusal to implement release orders: One of the most significant obstacles facing the Lawyers for Justice group in its work is the security services' refusal to implement release orders issued by Palestinian courts. This is in addition to the ongoing of arbitrary arrests and detentions by governors or the head of the security apparatus. Cases of disrespect for judicial decisions by some security agencies are frequent, obstructing the administration of justice and reflecting a deterioration in respect of the rule of law. Furthermore, unlawful detention by security agencies without any legal basis, whether by governors or based on orders from security apparatus heads, reflects an abuse of their authority and puts individuals' rights at real risk. This challenge poses a significant obstacle to the group's efforts, to protect the rights of detainees and guarantee their legal rights. It places it in direct confrontation with the executive authority, which must implement judicial decisions and respect human rights.
4. Lack of funding: Lawyers for Justice Group faces a lack of funding and support, which hinders the effective implementation of its legal and human rights activities. This lack is one of the challenges the group faces in documenting violations and providing legal support and advice to victims. This lack limits its ability to hire specialized lawyers, provide the necessary resources to enhance its field work, and secure its logistical needs to expand its impact in the field of human rights. The lack of funding also impacts negatively on its ability to support long-term work.

The Lawyers for Justice Group is making exceptional efforts to defend human rights despite the profound challenges it faces. This is in an environment where human rights are not respected and where hate speech and incitement against human rights defenders are widespread. Despite the ongoing incitement and increasing pressure, the group continues its mission to highlight, monitor, and document violations and repressive practices, striving to maintain its independence and legal impartiality in the face of ongoing attempts to distort and restrict its work.



Conclusion

This report reflects the ongoing efforts of the Lawyers for Justice Group to promote and protect human rights in Palestine, including the right to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, and freedom of association, among others. This is particularly true in light of the significant political and legal challenges facing the Palestinian people. Since its founding day, the group has focused on protecting the fundamental rights of Palestinians and has confronted various challenges, both through documenting violations and providing legal support to groups affected by these violations, perpetrated by the executive bodies of the Palestinian Authority.

In the context of the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, the group made exceptional efforts to document Israeli crimes and settlement practices against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, as well as systematic practices against Bedouin communities in the Jordan Valley. Furthermore, the group continued to monitor the conditions of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons and document the violations they are subjected to, particularly torture, ill-treatment, and starvation, through group members' visits to prisoners inside Israeli prisons.

Despite the incitement campaigns and obstacles faced by the Lawyers for Justice group, including attempts to belittle its human rights work, the group has proven its resilience in the face of these challenges, continuing to provide legal support to those affected. It has also successfully used the evidence and testimonies it has collected to organize advocacy campaigns aimed at protecting the rights of Palestinians.



Recommendations

1. Harmonizing legislation with international treaties and agreements: Harmonizing Palestinian legislation with international human rights treaties and agreements that have been ratified and published in the Official Gazette is crucial. However, these treaties have not been implemented as required, as they are not sufficiently harmonized with other domestic laws, hindering the effective implementation of the human rights stipulated. Therefore, it is essential to amend domestic legislation to align it with international standards, and ensure the full implementation of these agreements. This will enhance the protection of human rights in Palestine, including compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture.
2. Legislative and judicial reforms: It is necessary to enact new laws that keep pace with societal developments, respect rights and freedoms, and adopt a modern penal code that is consistent with fair trial guarantees. Furthermore, it is necessary to enact a law on the right to access information to enhance transparency and accountability. Strengthening the independence of the judiciary by restructuring the Supreme Judicial Council and eliminating executive interference in the judiciary's work. The Judicial Authority Law must also be revised to ensure the independence of judges and ensure justice in human rights cases.
3. Amending Decree-Law No. (10) of 2018 regarding cybercrimes and its amendments: It is necessary to implement the Prime Minister's decision to amend the Decree-Law on Cybercrimes in accordance with human rights and international standards. The law must be amended to ensure the protection of basic rights such as freedom

of expression and privacy, while taking into account not using it as a tool to restrict these rights. Cooperation between the relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Justice, must also be strengthened to ensure that the amendments are consistent with the basic principles of human rights, and to ensure that the decision is implemented in a manner that guarantees justice and equality for all individuals without infringing on public freedoms.

4. Prosecuting websites that incite against human rights defenders: It is imperative that relevant authorities prosecute websites, such as Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, and others, that use their platforms to incite against human rights defenders. Efforts must be intensified to combat hate speech and incitement to violence targeting these defenders, and laws must be strictly applied to prosecute those who use these platforms to harm fundamental rights and public freedoms.
5. Strengthening lawyers' right to defend their clients and ensure a fair trial: It is essential to facilitate lawyers' ability to communicate with their clients and accurately and securely know their places of detention. The relevant authorities must provide legal mechanisms, that allow lawyers to visit their clients in their places of detention without hindrance, and ensure that information about their places of detention is not tampered with. Official bodies must also facilitate access to information related to detainees, thus contributing to strengthening lawyers' right to defend their clients and ensuring a fair trial.

6. Ensure the immediate and effective implementation of court decisions and release orders: It is essential that executive authorities implement court rulings, including the release of individuals ordered by the courts. Failure to implement these decisions constitutes a violation of fundamental rights and undermines the rule of law. Therefore, relevant authorities must take the necessary measures to ensure respect for and independence of the judiciary and ensure the effective and fair administration of justice. Effective measures must be taken to halt arbitrary detention, including detention by governors and detention by the head of the security apparatus.
7. Activating the Role of the Human Rights Prosecution and Investigative Committees: It is essential to activate the role of the Human Rights Prosecution, and the investigative committees formed to investigate human rights violations committed by Palestinian security services, such as killings, arbitrary arrests, and other violations. These committees must be independent and strengthen accountability for officials while ensuring the transparency of legal procedures. This will ensure justice is served, individual rights are protected, and crimes of torture are prosecuted and held accountable.
8. Strengthening Protection for Vulnerable Groups: Work to reform laws related to the protection of women, children, and vulnerable groups, particularly against arbitrary arrests or exploitation by security services, in addition to enacting laws to protect them from societal violence. Furthermore, it is essential that security services respect societal norms and values, particularly in their treatment of women journalists, lawyers, activists, students, and human rights defenders.