



# Social Movements in Palestine:

## The Experience of Civic Action and Legal Protection Frameworks

Lawyers for Justice

2025





## Table of Contents

Social Movements in Palestine: The Experience of Civic Action and Legal Protection Frameworks . . . . .	01
Introductory Overview . . . . .	05
Chapter One: The Emergence and Development of Social Movements in Palestine (2015–2025) . . . . .	07
Chapter Two: Legal and Constitutional Protection of Social Movements in Palestine . . . . .	11
First: Constitutional Guarantees in the Palestinian Basic Law . . . . .	12
Second: The Public Meetings Law . . . . .	13
Third: Legal Systems and National Legislation Related to Civic and Trade Union Action . . . . .	14
Fourth: The Palestinian Authority' s International Obligations and Accession to Treaties and Conventions . . . . .	15
Fifth: The Gap Between Law and Practice. . . . .	16
Chapter Three: The Impact of Repression on Social Movements. . . . .	17
First: Forms of Repression Practiced Against Social Movements. . . . .	18

Second: The Impact of Repression on the Development of Social Move- ments and Their Role . . . . .	19
Third: Challenges Resulting from Repression and Their Role in the Decline of Social Movements . . . . .	19
Chapter Four: Practical Cases . . . . .	22
First: The Teachers' Movement . . . . .	24
Second: Tal 'at Movement. . . . .	24
Third: The Justice for Nizar Banat Movement. . . . .	25
Conclusion . . . . .	28
Recommendations . . . . .	30



Funded by:



Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to **Human Rights** Defenders

المؤسسة الأورو-متوسطية لدعم المدافعين عن **حقوق الإنسان**

Fondation euro-méditerranéenne de soutien aux défenseur-e-s des **droits de l'Homme**

## Introductory Overview

Social movements constitute one of the most prominent forms of collective expression of demands and rights in contemporary societies. They have increasingly played a vital role in advancing political and social change, shaping collective awareness that reflects citizens' priorities and aspirations, and ultimately achieving the objectives for which these movements were formed.

In the Palestinian context, social movements have emerged within an exceptionally complex political and social environment, marked by military occupation, internal political division, the declining role of traditional factions, parties, and trade unions, and the accumulation of economic and social challenges over many years. This has rendered the Palestinian experience of social movements a multifaceted one that requires in-depth analysis from multiple perspectives.

This report aims to examine the emergence and development of social movements in Palestine over the past decade by tracing the political and social backgrounds that contributed to their formation, and by reviewing the roles they have played in recent years—particularly in expanding civic participation, holding authorities accountable, and expressing pressing societal issues such as public freedoms and social justice. These movements have become especially prominent amid the spread of corruption within certain official institutions and the declining effectiveness of traditional social structures, making them akin to social uprisings emerging from within the civic structure itself, raising fundamental questions of legitimacy, representation, and alternative paths to change outside formal frameworks.

The report also focuses on the legal and constitutional framework governing the work of social movements, particularly the guarantees enshrined in the Palestinian Basic Law concerning freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, and the right to trade union organization. It further examines relevant international references, foremost among them

the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which have become integral to the Palestinian legal system pursuant to the international commitments undertaken by the Palestinian Authority.

In this context, fundamental questions arise regarding the effectiveness of legal and constitutional protections and the extent to which they are reflected in practice in providing a safe legal environment that respects the right to civic action and ensures freedom of social mobilization without unlawful interference or restrictions.

Additionally, the report addresses the impact of repression and persecution on the trajectory and development of social movements, whether through direct security restrictions or through the use of legal tools such as the Public Prosecution and judiciary to pursue activists. It analyzes the effects of these practices on the momentum of movements, levels of public participation, interaction of various social groups, and the prospects for sustainability or contraction within an unsafe and discouraging civic environment.

Accordingly, the report seeks to combine theoretical analysis with empirical observation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experience of social movements in Palestine and to assess potential pathways for supporting and empowering them within a legal framework consistent with the principles of law and human rights.

This report adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology, combining legal analysis with case study approaches to present an in-depth and comprehensive reading of social movements in Palestine in terms of their emergence, development, legal framework, and the challenges they face in the current political and field context.

# Chapter One:

## The Emergence and Development of Social Movements in Palestine (2015–2025)



Between 2015 and 2025, the occupied West Bank witnessed a notable escalation in social movement activity amid difficult political, economic, and social conditions. This period coincided with the continuation of occupation, internal political division, the absence of elections, declining trust in official institutions, and worsening living conditions. These realities pushed broad segments of Palestinian society to seek alternative means of expressing their demands and participating in public affairs, particularly in light of the limited legal and political space available and the increasing restrictions imposed by the authorities on civic and trade union activities.

In 2014, an official decision was issued by the head of the executive authority banning the work of the Public Employees' Union following the arrest of its president and deputy after they called for a general strike to demand employees' rights. This decision constituted a serious turning point that weakened public sector trade union organization and subsequently curtailed unions' ability to act freely, highlighting the limited legal protection for civil and trade union rights at the time and paving the way for the emergence of new movements seeking alternative frameworks for expressing popular demands.

Since 2015, numerous social, rights-based, and demand-oriented movements have emerged to fill the gap between societal needs and the capacities of traditional structures. These movements focused on citizens' daily and tangible issues, including teachers' rights, labor rights, consumer protection, the rights of persons with disabilities, public freedoms, freedom of expression, anti-corruption efforts, and calls for political reform. Over time, these movements developed their organizational tools and modes of expression, utilizing social media, digital campaigns, and peaceful protest to broaden their impact and advocate for citizens' rights independently of traditional constraints.

Economic and social movements were characterized by independence from traditional frameworks, direct demands, rapid initiative-taking, flexibility, and in some cases the adoption of rotating leadership models that



distributed responsibilities and prevented decision-making monopolization, thereby ensuring continuity despite external pressures.

Notable movements between 2016 and 2025 included the Unified Teachers' Movement, which focused on protecting teachers' rights, opposing forced retirement, improving wages, and safeguarding trade union freedoms amid accusations that the official Teachers' Union aligned with government policies at the expense of teachers' rights. The "Enough with Telecommunications Companies" movement sought to protect consumer rights and ensure transparency in telecommunications services amid high prices, monopolization, and weak regulatory oversight. The Palestinian labor movement also worked to promote workers' rights and fair labor conditions despite official neglect. The "For a Decent Life for Persons with Disabilities" movement successfully organized a 63-day sit-in in October 2020 demanding government health insurance for persons with disabilities, achieving its demands.

Social movements also played key roles in addressing major crises, including the Unified Palestinian Movement (2018–2019), which successfully pressured for the repeal of the Social Security Law. Additionally, social, youth, and trade union movements participated in campaigns calling for an end to the genocidal war on Gaza, demonstrating their ability to engage with national issues alongside daily concerns despite political and security constraints.

Movements faced significant challenges, including security pressure, restrictions on assembly and expression, political divisions, economic hardship, weak institutionalization, poor documentation, and limited independent media coverage. Nevertheless, they built community support networks and sustained pressure to achieve demands and confront repressive policies.

Despite these obstacles, social movements achieved tangible successes, raising awareness of rights, influencing policies, strengthening solidarity, developing flexible collective action models, and opening public debate

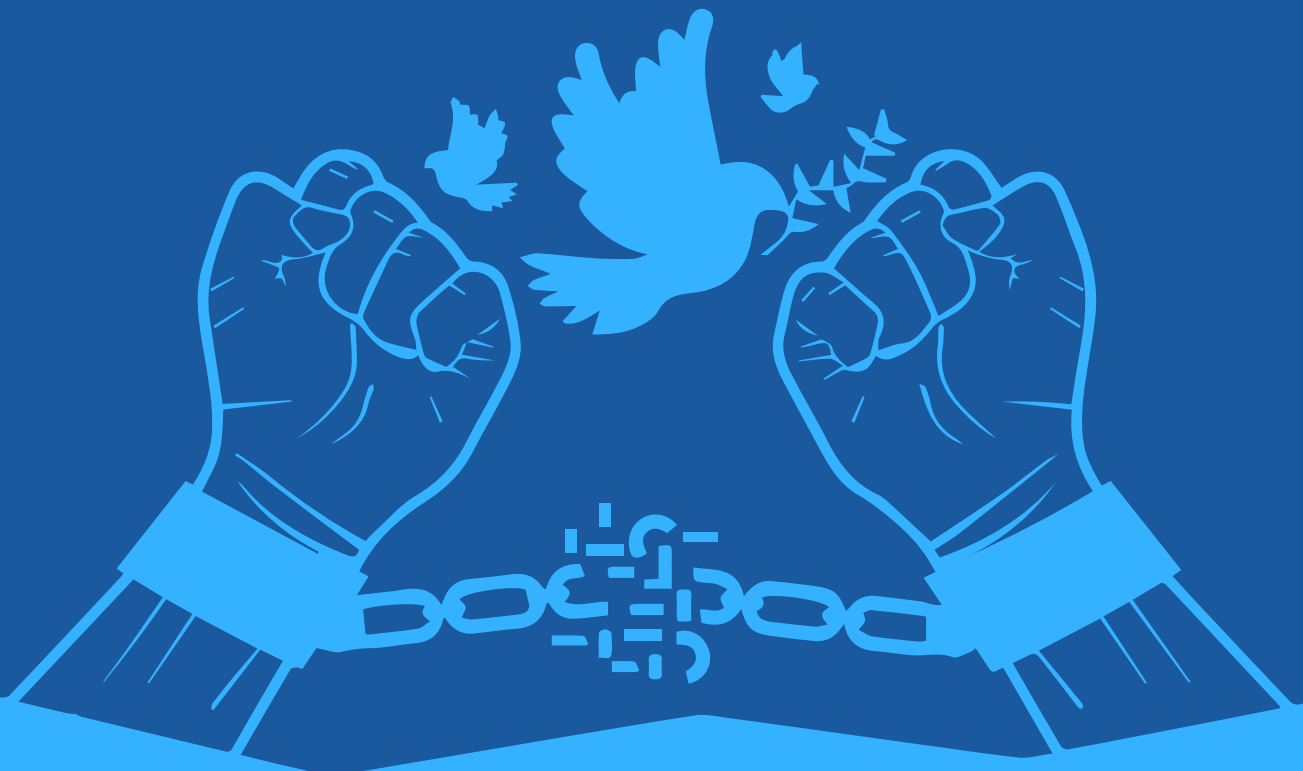
spaces on corruption and fundamental rights. Their engagement with Gaza-related advocacy further demonstrated their capacity to address national and strategic issues.

Between 2015 and 2025, social movements became a key indicator of Palestinian societal vitality and commitment to defending rights and participating in public life, overcoming fear and challenging authority-aligned unions.

Despite the successes achieved by these movements, there remains an urgent need to develop unified organizational frameworks that facilitate coordination among various active groups and to document accumulated experiences in order to benefit from them in the future. Strengthening the legal and media independence of these movements has also become essential to ensure the sustainability of their long-term impact. Moreover, national dialogue among Palestinian groups and social movements is an important tool to guarantee these movements' ability to influence public policies and protect fundamental rights, while preserving their independence and their capacity to withstand growing challenges—whether economic, political, or security-related.

# Chapter Two:

## Legal and Constitutional Protection of Social Movements in Palestine



Although the Palestinian Basic Law and the international agreements that the Palestinian Authority has acceded to since its establishment provide a legal framework that is presumed to guarantee freedom of civic action in all its forms, the practices adopted by official institutions continue to constitute an obstacle to the implementation of these guarantees. Instead of using laws as a tool to protect rights, they are often exploited to restrict civic space and curtail public freedoms, thereby limiting the ability of individuals and groups to exercise their fundamental rights. In this context, an urgent need arises to activate these laws in a fair and impartial manner, ensure judicial independence, and protect the right to expression and organization without interference from official and security bodies.

Empowering social movements in Palestine requires more than merely developing legal texts; it requires activating and implementing these texts in a manner consistent with the Palestinian reality, while ensuring the protection of rights through both domestic and international laws. It is not sufficient to have legal provisions that recognize rights; rather, they must be effectively applied on the ground—including ensuring protection of the right to trade union organization, the right to peaceful assembly, and the right to form associations.

## First: Constitutional Guarantees in the Palestinian Basic Law

The Palestinian Basic Law is considered the primary legal document defining individuals' rights and public freedoms in Palestine. It stipulates a set of rights that guarantee freedom of expression and organization. Article 25 provides for the right to work, including the right to trade union organization. Article (26) stipulates the “right to participate in political life,” including forming political parties and joining them in accordance with the law, as well as forming unions, associations, federations, leagues, clubs, and popular institutions in accordance with the law. It also recognizes the right to hold private meetings without the presence of police officers and to hold public meetings, marches, and gatherings within the limits of the law.

In addition, the Basic Law guarantees rights related to public freedoms in its dedicated chapter, where Article (19) provides for “freedom of opinion” without prejudice, and for expressing and publishing opinions—by speech, writing, or other means of expression and art—subject to the provisions of the law. These articles constitute the constitutional foundation that is presumed to protect social movements and grant individuals the right to form unions, associations, and political parties.

## Second: The Public Meetings Law

The Public Meetings Law is among the key laws regulating Palestinians’ right to express their opinions through peaceful gatherings. Although this law aims to facilitate the exercise of this right, its application sometimes faces challenges due to certain restrictions imposed by security bodies, such as requiring permits for protests or political gatherings, which may hinder the full exercise of this right. Nevertheless, the said law—Law No. 12 of 1998, adopted by the Legislative Council—states in Article Two: “The right to hold public meetings, seminars, and marches freely shall be guaranteed, and it shall not be infringed or restricted except in accordance with the controls stipulated in this law.” Article Three of the same law refers to notifying the authorities of the meeting without conditioning it upon the approval of official bodies, stating: “Public meetings may be held provided that a written notification is addressed to the Governor or the Director of Police at least 48 hours prior to the time of holding the meeting.”

Accordingly, the Public Meetings Law No. 12 of 1998 also provides legal coverage that ensures respect for and the strengthening of freedom of assembly and public meetings without any restriction.

### Third: Legal Systems and National Legislation Related to Civic and Trade Union Action

In addition to the Basic Law, there are several legal systems that strengthen the protection of civic and trade union action in Palestine. Among these laws, the Associations Law (Law No. 1 of 2000) is one of the most prominent legislations regulating the work of charitable associations and non-governmental organizations in Palestine. It was adopted by the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2000 and defines the procedures for establishing associations, members' rights, associations' obligations, and the role these associations may play in Palestinian civil society. In 2021, an amendment was introduced and replaced the Associations Law with Associations Law No. 7 of 2021 to align with modern challenges, including providing a more flexible legal framework for associations and civil society organizations. However, these amendments imposed conditions leading to increased oversight over civic and charitable activities, raising questions about the impact of these amendments on freedom of civic action.

With respect to trade union organization, the Palestinian Labor Law provides a legal framework to protect the right to unionize and guarantees workers' right to establish unions and participate in labor activities without exposure to any form of repression or discrimination. It also places obligations on employers to enable workers to exercise their rights to organize and bargain collectively, in addition to the Palestinian Basic Law's confirmation of the right to trade union organization.

Although the Palestinian Authority has not issued a specific law regulating trade union action, trade union organization as a right is affirmed by the Palestinian Basic Law. Furthermore, the agreements and treaties signed by the Palestinian Authority have become binding upon it, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which have become an integral part of the applicable legal system pursuant to Decree-Law No. 18 of 2023 and Decree-Law No. 23 of 2023 issued by the President of the Palestinian Authority in 2023.

## Fourth: The Palestinian Authority's International Obligations and Accession to Treaties and Conventions

The Palestinian Authority has acceded to a number of international agreements that impose obligations upon it to protect human rights and public freedoms. Among these agreements is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provides for rights such as the right to organization, the right to peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression—confirmed by the enactment of Decree-Law No. 18 of 2023 regarding the publication of the ICCPR. The Palestinian Authority also acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and approved it pursuant to Decree-Law No. 23 of 2023, publishing it in the Official Gazette. Thus, these two covenants—beyond their value as international treaties—have become part of the governing legal framework, affirming individuals' right to trade union activity, their right to fair working conditions, and their right to enjoy economic and social freedoms. These agreements place upon the Palestinian Authority the responsibility to promote and protect civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in a manner that ensures full freedom of organization and assembly.

Accession to these treaties obliges the Palestinian Authority to adhere to international standards in protecting civil and political rights, including ensuring judicial independence and protecting the right to protest and organize. Nevertheless, despite international obligations, there remains a significant gap between legal texts and what is applied in practice on the ground.

## Fifth: The Gap Between Law and Practice

Despite the existence of legal and constitutional guarantees protecting public freedoms and the right to peaceful assembly—thus safeguarding the work of movements, unions, and social action groups—the effective application of these laws often does not align with their legal texts. National laws such as the Public Meetings Law and the Associations Law are exploited as tools to restrict civic and trade union activities. Individuals participating

in social movements are subjected to harassment by security authorities, leading to obstruction of freedom of expression and organization.

Complaints have increasingly arisen regarding the use of laws to impose restrictions on freedoms rather than guarantee them, reflecting the gap between legal texts and their actual implementation. This also reflects the tendency of executive bodies to employ legal provisions in a manner that serves the political system, rather than applying these laws correctly. In this context, there is a pressing need to develop effective oversight mechanisms for the application of laws and to ensure judicial independence so that the judiciary can protect public freedoms against violations that may occur under the guise of the law.

Accordingly, legal and constitutional protection of social movements in Palestine constitutes a vital issue that requires effective activation and enforcement of legal texts. Although the Palestinian Basic Law guarantees a range of rights, challenges remain due to the gap between these texts and their practical implementation.

To genuinely realize these freedoms, efforts must be made to ensure judicial independence and to activate laws in a manner that guarantees protection of the right to trade union organization, the right to peaceful assembly, and the right to form associations, along with strengthening oversight over the application of laws in a way that protects social movements and promotes civic and trade union action in Palestine.



# Chapter Three:

## The Impact of Repression on Social Movements



As the previous chapter demonstrated a clear gap between legal and constitutional guarantees and their practical implementation, this gap is directly reflected in repressive practices affecting social movements in Palestine. Repression, in its various security and administrative forms, is among the most prominent factors hindering the development of these movements, as it limits opportunities for collective expression, reduces safe public participation, and weakens citizens' ability to engage in social and trade union action without fear of persecution or punishment.

As long as these practices persist, social movements become more vulnerable to decline and contraction, whether in terms of popular participation levels or their ability to influence public policies. Therefore, enhancing the effectiveness of social movements is inseparable from the necessity to review prevailing security and legal policies and to protect civil and political rights in practice—not merely through legal texts—thereby ensuring a safer and more sustainable environment for collective action.

## **First: Forms of Repression Practiced Against Social Movements**

The forms of repression experienced by social movements are diverse and include restrictions on peaceful gatherings, prevention or dispersal of events, and summonses and arrests on the basis of participation in protests or trade union activities. Such practices also include the use of laws and administrative regulations to impose restrictions on public action, interference in union affairs, and constraints on media coverage of movements, or efforts to distort their image and question their legitimacy—thereby limiting their ability to reach public opinion and build broad community support.

Repression is not limited to direct security measures; it also takes indirect and more complex forms, including attempts to co-opt and control certain movements or their leadership, and the use of economic and administrative pressures to weaken or dismantle them—thus emptying them of their popular substance and undermining their independence.

## Second: The Impact of Repression on the Development of Social Movements and Their Role

Repression directly affects the trajectory of social movements by leading to decreased popular participation, particularly among groups most exposed to risks. It weakens movements' ability to organize and plan over the long term and negatively impacts the stability of their internal structures and the continuity of their leadership. Some movements have shifted from broad collective frameworks into limited initiatives associated with individuals or narrow groups due to security targeting and sustained pressures.

This reality has contributed to creating a state of fear and hesitation within society, reflected in the reluctance of many families to allow their children to participate in public activities, fearing persecution or accountability. Repression has also undermined the role of certain trade union movements, particularly in education, where teachers were subjected to pressure and threats and some were forced into early retirement—constituting a clear violation of freedom of trade union organization and freedom of expression—thereby weakening one of the most important pillars of social mobilization.

## Third: Challenges Resulting from Repression and Their Role in the Decline of Social Movements

Repression imposes a set of structural challenges that contribute to the shrinking of social movements, including the absence of a sense of legal safety, declining trust in official institutions, exhaustion of activists' energies, and the weakening of the cognitive and organizational accumulation of movements. Many movements end after achieving partial demands or retreat under pressure without being able to document their experience or develop their tools to transition to more advanced stages of community action.

The absence of accountability and weakness of the judiciary have also deepened the impact of repression, as some initiatives resorted to tribal or

individual solutions rather than turning cases into public issues, limiting the ability to form broad and sustainable movements. In this context, community initiatives such as the “National Commission for Civil Peace” emerged as a response to the fragility of official justice and an attempt to build social safety networks; however, they too operate within an environment rife with restrictions and pressures.

Ultimately, it is evident that repression does not merely restrict the freedom of social movements; it affects the core of their role and function and prevents their transformation into a societal force capable of exerting sustained influence on public policies. This reality confirms that the absence of effective implementation of legal guarantees, and the continued use of security and legal tools to constrain public action, constitute a direct threat to civic life and social peace. Therefore, any serious pathway to enhance the effectiveness of social movements requires addressing the roots of repression, providing a legal and security environment that protects freedom of organization and expression, and restoring the role of social movements as one of the last forms of free popular expression in the Palestinian context.

In summary, repression in its security, administrative, and legal forms is one of the most prominent factors hindering the development of social movements in Palestine and limiting their ability to continue and perform their role. Despite their importance in expressing societal demands and filling the vacuum resulting from weak parties, the decline of unions, and the erosion of civil society institutions, persistent repressive practices have narrowed the public sphere, weakened popular participation, and created an environment dominated by fear and the absence of legal safety.

The manifestations of repression include using laws to restrict civic and trade union action, interfering in unions, restricting media coverage, and attempts at distortion and co-optation—negatively impacting the organization and continuity of movements and rendering some of them limited in impact due to ongoing pressure.

Moreover, the lack of effective application of legal guarantees, weak judi-

cial independence, and declining accountability mechanisms have deepened the impact of repression and reduced movements' capacity for accumulation, organization, and sustained influence on public policies. Thus, strengthening the effectiveness of social movements is linked to addressing the roots of repression and providing a legal and security environment that protects freedom of organization, assembly, and expression, and restores their role as a fundamental component of civic life and social peace in Palestine.

# Chapter Four:

## Practical Cases



The study of practical cases constitutes the applied stage of the theoretical propositions addressed in the previous chapters regarding social movements in Palestine, including their definition, objectives, and legal and social frameworks. This study illustrates how movements interact with the legal environment and the social and political reality, and how the gap between legal texts and actual practice affects their effectiveness and ability to achieve their objectives.

Although there are legal texts presumed to protect freedom of expression, the right to protest, peaceful assembly, and opinion expression, the practical reality often witnesses significant restrictions on public freedoms. These challenges include constraining activities, legal persecution, and security restrictions, making the study of practical cases an important tool for understanding how movements resist these challenges and succeed in influencing public opinion.

When discussing social movements active in the occupied West Bank during 2015–2025, it becomes clear that there were many diverse movements operating in a climate charged with repression and persecution. Although some movements lost part of their effectiveness or failed to create fundamental change, they at least succeeded in breaking the “red lines” that previously prevented citizens from raising their voices or launching open protest discourse.

The activity of these movements unfolded under complex political circumstances resulting from internal political division and ongoing occupation, making activists’ work fraught with challenges. In many cases, activists were arrested multiple times—either by the Israeli occupation authorities or by the Palestinian Authority’s security services—often for the same reasons or because of their involvement in these movements.

This reality reflects the strength of popular will and the ability of movements to persist in demanding their rights and generating tangible impacts in society despite strict restrictions on freedom of expression and social practice—making the study of practical cases a bridge linking theory and practice in understanding the reality of Palestinian movements.

## First: The Teachers' Movement

The experience of the teachers' movement, which began to emerge and spread in 2016, is among the most prominent social movements in Palestine. It emerged amid the weakness of the official Teachers' Union supported by the executive authority, allowing teachers the opportunity for broad engagement and participation.

The movement succeeded in achieving tangible results, particularly after the strike undertaken by teachers to demand their rights and entitlements, making it a successful and lesson-rich experience due to its capacity to influence, gain teachers' trust, and mobilize their base.

Like other movements, participants faced persecution and repression, including penalties, arrests, dismissal from service, or referral to early retirement, due to their central role in supporting the movement's success.

Ten years after its launch, security and administrative persecution continues despite the constitutional guarantees provided by the Palestinian Basic Law and the ICCPR and ICESCR. These persecutions included arrests, summonses to interrogation centers, and various administrative sanctions.

## Second: Tal 'at Movement

Tal 'at represents a feminist youth movement aimed at strengthening women's rights and social equality. Despite the existence of laws to protect and empower women, the practical implementation of these laws remains weak, posing a challenge to the movement's ability to achieve its objectives.

The role of Tal 'at is not limited to women's issues; it forms an integral part of the broader Palestinian social movement, contributing to expressing opinions and demanding change regarding public issues, national concerns, and political and social demands.

It is also considered among the movements subjected to pressure and persecution, particularly due to its role in activating the street and calling for engagement in activities supporting civil and political rights.



### Third: The Justice for Nizar Banat Movement

The Justice for Nizar Banat movement is an example of movements struggling for human rights and justice following the killing of activist Nizar Banat in June 2021. It focused on holding perpetrators accountable and opposing political repression.

The movement faced security repression and restrictions on freedom of protest, amid a wide gap between legal texts and actual practice. Nevertheless, it demonstrated society's capacity to exert popular pressure and mobilize public opinion, highlighting the importance of movements in confronting legal and political constraints.

Many participants in the Justice for Nizar Banat movement—whether ordinary citizens or public sector employees—were subjected to various forms of security and administrative persecution due to expressing their opinions and demanding justice and accountability for his killing. These persecutions included arrests, summonses for interrogation, and disciplinary sanctions imposed on some public employees. This reality underscores the gap between legal provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression and the right to demand justice, and the practical implementation, reflecting the significant challenges faced by social movements when exercising their right to express opinions and demand fundamental rights.

The movement also demonstrated society's ability to express collective anger and demand rights and justice, as it became a unified platform for social movements and rights-based and youth initiatives calling for accountability for those responsible for his death. It contributed to mobilizing public opinion and raising awareness of human rights issues and citizens' rights to expression and accountability, reflecting the vital role of Palestinian social movements in confronting political repression and creating tangible impact on the national scene.

The fourth chapter constitutes an applied stage of the theoretical perspectives addressed regarding social movements in Palestine, including their definition, objectives, and legal and social frameworks. It reviews key prac-

tical movements such as the teachers' movement, Tal 'at, and the Justice for Nizar Banat movement to illustrate how they interact with the legal, political, and social environment, and how capable they are of achieving their objectives amid various challenges.

Despite the existence of legal texts guaranteeing freedom of expression, the right to protest, and civic participation, these movements faced major constraints, including security and administrative persecution, arrests, and disciplinary sanctions. Nevertheless, they demonstrated their capacity for societal influence, mobilizing public opinion, breaking red lines limiting freedom of expression, and strengthening civic participation. They also contributed to raising awareness of national, political, and social issues and unifying efforts among different initiatives and movements, reflecting the vital role of Palestinian movements in confronting repression, demanding fundamental rights, and achieving social and political change.

The practical case studies indicate that social movements in Palestine emerged due to the weakness of political parties and the decline of unions and civil society institutions, prompting individuals to seek alternative frameworks to express their demands. Technology and social media strengthened these movements' capacity to organize and express demands with speed and flexibility, away from traditional legal constraints.

Different experiences show that social movements can achieve tangible impact despite facing security and administrative pressures, including arrests, summonses, early dismissal from service, salary deductions, and arbitrary transfers. These experiences reflect the wide gap between legal texts guaranteeing expression and assembly rights and the reality of implementation imposing major restrictions on freedoms.

Movements' efforts focus on key issues including defending civil and social rights, combating corruption, holding security services accountable, advancing women's and youth rights, and protecting the social fabric. Some movements sustained collective continuity through flexible leadership models that distribute responsibilities and prevent monopolization of decisions,

while other movements remained tied to specific individuals, reducing their sustainability.

The importance of cooperation among different movements emerges through coordination of efforts, exchange of expertise, and focus on urgent national and rights-based issues, while preserving each movement's independence. It is also important to develop media and legal mechanisms to protect movements from distortion, ensure the independence of trade union and civic institutions, and build an inclusive framework bringing together different social initiatives based on transparency and participation to ensure sustained impact and greater effectiveness in Palestinian society.

## Conclusion

This report has shown that social movements in Palestine during 2015–2025 represent one of the most prominent tools of civic and societal expression. They emerged as a direct response to economic, political, and social challenges, including occupation, internal political division, and restrictions on traditional civic participation. These movements demonstrated a notable capacity to mobilize society, hold authorities accountable, and defend citizens' rights, despite increasing difficulties due to repression and security and administrative measures.

Legal analysis also revealed a relatively advanced constitutional and legal framework guaranteeing the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and trade union and civic organization, supported by the Palestinian Authority's international obligations. However, the gap between legal texts and their application on the ground constituted a major obstacle to empowering movements, as certain laws were sometimes used to restrict civic activity, affecting participation levels and the sustainability of some movements. There is also a legislative deficit in several areas, such as the absence of a law regulating trade union organization, and the lack of a law on the right of access to information.

Through practical cases such as the teachers' movement, Tal 'at, and the Justice for Nizar Banat movement, it became evident that movements achieved tangible results—whether in protecting rights-based demands, mobilizing public opinion, or opening spaces for civic and political debate—despite security persecutions. These experiences also demonstrated society's ability to interact with and support movements, underscoring the importance of sustaining these initiatives in strengthening community awareness and effective advocacy.

In light of the above, it can be concluded that social movements in Palestine represent an active societal force capable of influence. However, they require stronger legal independence, protection of freedom of orga-

nization and assembly, and the development of cooperation frameworks among different initiatives, alongside effective implementation of laws and constitutional provisions to ensure a safer environment for continued civic and societal action.

These findings constitute a starting point for presenting practical recommendations aimed at supporting social movements and strengthening their sustained impact in Palestinian society, achieving integration between law, civic practice, and citizens' fundamental rights.

## Recommendations

1. Ensure that social movements remain independent of any political entity or specific individuals, allowing freedom of expression and genuine representation of citizens' demands.
2. Coordinate efforts and exchange expertise among different movements around common issues, while respecting each movement's specificity and defined objectives.
3. Establish a representative body for social movements to enhance their local and international impact, ensure follow-up on national and social issues, and transform popular demands into practical steps and tangible results.
4. Update laws regulating social movements and ensure their right to operate freely, while strengthening oversight over executive authority performance and ensuring judicial independence to fulfill its supervisory and justice role without political interference, thereby ensuring protection of rights and the achievement of justice.
5. Strengthen the independence of oversight institutions and media outlets and protect them from attempts at co-optation or political influence to ensure oversight, accountability, and rights protection.
6. Organize awareness campaigns to strengthen citizens' understanding of the risks of corruption, the importance of transparency and accountability, and to encourage youth and marginalized groups to participate in social movements.
7. Enhance the capacity of trade union, educational, and cultural movements to continue, support the movement of persons with disabilities, and document their experience for use in developing community action.
8. Benefit from successful and unsuccessful movement experiences to develop more effective and sustainable working methodologies.

9. Build popular support networks from civil society institutions and local communities to ensure sustained influence of movements and genuine representation of citizens' voices.
10. Direct movements' efforts toward combating corruption, protecting civil and social rights, promoting justice, and working to shape a unified popular movement capable of organizing popular energies within an inclusive and sustainable framework.

End  
Lawyers For Justice  
2025