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Israel's Ban on 37 International Nongovernmental Organisations

Executive Summary

On 30 December 2025, 37 international organizations operating in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) received formal notification from Israeli authorities that their registrations would not be renewed and would expire effective on January 1st, with all activities required to cease following a 60-day wind-down period. These actions follow the introduction of new registration requirements obliging organizations to submit sensitive personal data on staff and partners, exposing them to serious protection and security risks. The new requirements also enable Israel to deny the registration of organizations on a broad range of grounds, including if the organization or any of its officeholders has called for a boycott of Israel.

New registration requirements go beyond being just administrative procedures and amount to a political attack on humanitarian and civic space, with direct and severe consequences for Palestinian communities that depend on international assistance. At a moment of unprecedented humanitarian need and a man-made crisis, characterized by mass forced displacement, food insecurity, a collapsed health system, and the killing of over 500 humanitarian workers since October 2023, such actions accelerate the catastrophic collapse of life-saving assistance across Gaza and the West Bank.^[1]

This wave of INGO deregistration takes place amid a broader escalation of restrictions targeting Palestinian civil society organizations and United Nations agencies, namely UNRWA. This move is part of a wider, systematic campaign of shrinking humanitarian and civic space, aimed at preventing international actors from bearing witness to Israeli crimes and violations. The impact of these measures extends far beyond individual organizations, undermining the functionality, neutrality, and long-term sustainability of the humanitarian system itself.

Key Issues:

1. Erosion of Humanitarian Principles and Civic Space

The revocation and denial of INGO registrations constitute a further escalation in a long-standing pattern of Israeli policies that have systematically narrowed humanitarian and civic space in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). When combined with Israel's sustained campaign targeting UNRWA and its repression of prominent Palestinian human rights organizations, these measures contribute to the deepening of an already dire political and humanitarian crisis across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

[1] UNRWA Situation Report #190 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, all information updated for 18–24 September 2025 (published 30 September 2025)

The current actions extend these restrictions to a broad spectrum of Palestinian and INGOs that are central to humanitarian delivery, protection programming, and coordination mechanisms. This not only disrupts aid operations but erodes the normative foundations of humanitarian action itself. It weakens coordination structures and degrades the collective capacity to respond to civilian rights and needs at scale.

The new registration regime undermines core humanitarian principles by introducing discretionary, security-based criteria into what should be a technical administrative process. This politicization sets a dangerous precedent for conditional humanitarian access in occupied contexts globally. Israeli officials have publicly downplayed the impact of deregistering prominent INGOs, alleging that affected organizations provide only a limited proportion of aid. In reality, many operate in a complementary and interconnected manner within the broader humanitarian system, through UN-contracted services, pooled funding mechanisms, and sector-wide coordination structures. No humanitarian actor is dispensable. Narrow or selective assessments obscure the realities of aid delivery and significantly underestimate the scale of disruption.

2. Weaponization of Humanitarian Aid

Imposing political and security conditions on organizations delivering life-saving assistance constitutes the weaponization and politicization of humanitarian aid. It entrenches systems of control that undermine both humanitarian effectiveness and the core principles of neutrality, independence, and impartiality.

Already, these policies are being operationalized in practice. Countless organizations have been met with the impossible choice: either comply with demands that expose staff and their families to serious protection risks or suspend critical life-saving services. This coercive dynamic exemplifies how administrative and security measures are being used to extract compliance under threat of operational shutdown.

Palestinian staff are particularly at risk under this regime. They are placed in an untenable position, forced to consent to the disclosure of sensitive personal and familial information to an occupying power or to bear responsibility for the closure of entire humanitarian programs. Such practices directly contravene humanitarian protection norms and raise grave concerns regarding surveillance and retaliation.

3. System-Wide Disruption of Aid Delivery

In the Gaza Strip, over 90% of the population relies entirely on humanitarian assistance. Since the ceasefire, Israel has allowed an average of only 102 aid trucks per day to enter Gaza—far below the agreed minimum of 600. Humanitarian operations function as an interconnected system, in which international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) play a critical coordinating, technical, and operational role across sectors.

The organizations targeted for deregistration are integral components of this broader humanitarian architecture, which collectively delivers:

- Over 50% of food assistance in Gaza
- Approximately 60% of field hospital operations
- Nearly 75% of shelter and non-food item distribution
- All treatment services for children with severe acute malnutrition [2]

In the occupied West Bank, INGOs similarly underpin the humanitarian response, providing lifesaving assistance during Israeli military raids and settler violence, alongside essential healthcare and education services.

The removal of even a subset of INGOs would fracture this system as a whole, triggering cascading failures across sectors. The likely consequences include immediate health facility closures, suspended food distributions, and the collapse of shelter pipelines, with direct and life-threatening impacts on civilians.

4. Opening the Door to Private and Politicised Aid Models

The systematic weakening and removal of established humanitarian actors risks creating a dangerous vacuum that may be filled by private, ad hoc, or politically aligned aid providers. Such models lack transparency, accountability, and adherence to international humanitarian principles. Unlike recognized humanitarian organizations, these private entities operate without international legal status or robust oversight mechanisms and lack the technical expertise required to deliver essential services, including health and education, that humanitarian organizations have long provided.

Proposals such as the United States' "New Gaza" initiative further entrench this trajectory. By inviting private investment and development initiatives without regard for Palestinian land ownership, self-determination, or governance, these plans place capital over people in profoundly exploitative ways. Gaza's reconstruction and economic future are being discussed in the absence of a political resolution that includes Palestinians, a legitimate governance framework, or respect for international law, while Israel continues to violate ceasefire commitments on a daily basis.

The growing reliance on private actors risks normalizing aid delivery models that prioritize control or profit over protection and humanitarian need. If left unchallenged, such approaches may be replicated in other humanitarian crises globally, setting a dangerous precedent. What is permitted—or prevented—in Palestine will have far-reaching consequences for the future integrity of humanitarian assistance worldwide.

[2] "53 international NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action," Medical Aid for Palestinians (30 Dec 2025)

Recommendations for International Diplomatic Missions

A. Diplomatic Engagement and Political Pressure

- Raise the INGO deregistration measures systematically in bilateral and multilateral engagements with Israeli authorities.
- Publicly and privately affirm that humanitarian access is a legal obligation, not a discretionary political choice that can be decided by an occupying power.

B. Protection of Humanitarian Space

- Encourage organizational partners to implement data protection measures for their staff, and reject demands that compromise staff safety or humanitarian neutrality.
- Support collective advocacy by humanitarian organizations resisting harmful registration requirements.

C. Donor and Policy Leverage

- Refrain from supporting or funding alternative aid mechanisms that bypass established humanitarian systems.
- Support independent monitoring and reporting on access restrictions and their humanitarian impact.

D. Support to Palestinian and International Civil Society

- Increase political and financial support to affected organizations, including legal assistance and diplomatic protection.
- Increase engagement with Palestinian civil society actors to assess impacts beyond formal humanitarian metrics.
- Safeguard civic space as an integral component of peace and accountability.

E. Accountability and Sanctions

- Hold Israel accountable for its disruption of humanitarian aid, and pressure it to open all crossings and ensure timely, sufficient humanitarian aid unconditionally into Gaza.
- Support diplomatic, military, and economic sanctions, including an arms and energy embargo and suspension of agreements that sustain Israel's occupation.