

June 6, 2017

### Statement by the Palestinian Performing Arts Network

We, active civil society organizations of the Palestinian cultural sector, condemn the decision of the governments of Norway and Denmark to freeze funding to Palestinian NGOs. This decision to halt Palestinian NGO funding will have an immediate and adverse effect on the sustainability of these NGOs, the Palestinian communities they serve, the principle of resisting occupation as a natural right of the Palestinian people, and legitimizing Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

The decision by your governments to halt funding to Palestinian NGOs is part of the far-right Israeli government's policy of combating the principle of right to resistance and weakening the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement. Norway's recent funding stance towards a women's center in Burqa Village de-legitimizes and criminalizes the lawful right of Palestinians to resist occupation and is a provocative shift towards conditional funding. On the other hand, Denmark's freeze of funding towards human right Palestinian NGOs is a result of the Israeli occupying global policy of masking the realities of their seventy-year occupation of Palestinians and their lands. BDS is a nonviolent global campaign attempting to increase economic and political pressure to end Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and acknowledge the right of return of Palestinian refugees. Palestinian human rights NGOs in the occupied Palestinian territories are an essential tool in highlighting the daily Israeli occupation violations of international humanitarian law.

Over the last year, the occupying Israeli military and armed Israeli settlers have deliberately killed and targeted innocent children and youth and have instituted policies of apartheid in the West Bank including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. These premeditated policies of provocations, collective punishment and deep-rooted racism against the Palestinian people requires now more than ever a voice of support, courage and humanity to be heard in Palestine and across the world.

The decision of your governments to halt NGO funding will in fact assist in serving the sustainability of Israeli occupation and increase Palestinian suffering.

On behalf of the active civil society organizations of the Palestinian cultural sector, we urge the governments of Norway and Denmark to reconsider their hasty decision and thoroughly assess the valuable impact of Palestinian NGOs in light of Israel's continued occupation.

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