

The International Humanitarian Law Centre to continue its work in the Israeli-Palestinian context following Israeli High Court judgment on Diakonia's registration

The IHL Centre, which is part of the Swedish international development organisation Diakonia, has worked to promote respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) in the [Israeli-Palestinian context](#) for decades.

On 31 August 2026, Israel's Supreme Court sitting as High Court of Justice unanimously rejected a petition from Diakonia, upholding a decision issued in December 2025 to deny the organisation's registration with the Israeli authorities pursuant to a new, heavily criticised procedure applicable to international NGOs as of 2025.

This procedure introduced additional requirements for [international organisations carrying out humanitarian activities for the benefit of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory \(oPt\)](#), including expanded information collection and stricter rules concerning Palestinian and international staff, alongside [additional, politicised grounds](#) for rejecting applications for registration from organisations [publicly denouncing violations of international law](#).

The Court based its decision on [Diakonia's call for a ban on trade with Israeli settlements in the oPt](#). This is a position [firmly grounded in international law](#), as confirmed by the findings of the [International Court of Justice's 2024 Advisory Opinion](#). The Court considered this position sufficient grounds to deny Diakonia's registration because it contravenes Israel's 2011 Boycott Law, which prohibits calling for a boycott not just of Israel but also of any area effectively under Israel's control.

Both the judgment and the underlying administrative decision therefore raise serious concerns about attitudes towards international law and the actors endeavouring to promote it. While the judgment will inevitably hamper the work of the IHL Centre in the context, our independent legal research, analysis, advice, and advocacy on IHL can largely be conducted remotely.

Despite this unfortunate development, the IHL Centre is determined to continue its work to promote respect for IHL without any compromise, and to redouble its efforts to support accountability for violations of international law in the Israeli-Palestinian context.

It must be emphasised that this case is far from an isolated incident. The ruling comes amid growing restrictions in recent years on civil society and humanitarian organisations working in Israel and the oPt. [Dozens of other prominent humanitarian organisations](#) were also denied registration with the Israeli authorities in 2025 pursuant to the new guidelines, including Doctors without Borders, the Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam, and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

These administrative restrictions are the latest in a long series of measures affecting first and foremost Palestinian, but also Israeli and international civil society organisations working in Israel and the oPt, as documented in the IHL Centre's research project [Shrinking Civic and Humanitarian Space in Israel-Palestine](#).

The significant deterioration brought about in the operational environment has had a particularly devastating and concerning impact on those organisations working to deliver crucial humanitarian assistance and to conduct human rights work directly in the oPt. Impeding their operations risks further undermining essential humanitarian relief, independent monitoring and documentation of violations of international law, and vital support for affected communities at a time when this work is more urgently needed than ever before.

The IHL Centre will continue to provide independent, evidence-based legal expertise and engage with humanitarian organisations, civil society, policymakers, and diplomatic actors in the Israeli-Palestinian context. Restrictions on our work do not diminish the importance of upholding IHL, protecting persons affected by armed conflict, and supporting accountability for violations of international law.