

21 February, 2022

Peter Limbourg
General director
Deutsche Welle
Kurt-Schumacher-Strasse 3
53113 Bonn
Germany

Dear Mr. Limbourg,

Subject: Over 100 civil society organizations call on DW to retract the biased report and end the smear Campaign

We are shocked and deeply concerned about the recent inaccurate and defamatory accusations made by Deutsche Welle's (DW) investigation report committee against Deutsche Welles Akademie (DWA) partners. The report, released on 6th February 2022, is just the latest development in an ongoing anti-Palestinian smear campaign, that silences Palestinian voices, restricts freedom of expression, suppresses legitimate political and human rights speech criticizing ongoing Israeli violations against Palestinians, blocks us from holding people and governments accountable for injustice and prohibits Palestinian journalists and Palestinian organizations from sharing their daily experiences of systematic human rights violations with the world.

We stress our commitment to reject and fight all forms of racism, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and other forms of racism. The aforementioned report adopts the definition of anti-Zionism as antisemitic, which has always been contested widely, including by many Jewish communities, where there has been significant opposition to this definition of antisemitism.

DW's adoption of such a discourse poses a great danger to freedom of opinion and expression. This approach conflates Jewish communities around the world with Israel, and falsely links them to the systematic oppression practiced by the Israeli authorities against Palestinians. DW should reject cooperating or aligning themselves with those who strive to spread smear campaigns against Palestinians, in an attempt to further spread lies instead of seeking to reach justice, freedom and dignity.

We deplore the denial of Palestinians' right to defend themselves and the actions taken to prevent them from documenting systematic human rights violations. Furthermore, the German government itself issued a statement calling on Israel to "[permanently halt eviction and demolition procedures of Palestinian structures](#)" in an attempt to stop the systematic violations practiced by the Israeli authorities against Palestinians in the

Occupied Palestinian Territory. Thus, we see that this report strips Palestinians of their humanity and their fundamental right to defend themselves in light of the escalated attacks they are being subjected to, not to mention the increasing restrictions on Palestinian civil society, specifically human rights organizations that are working hard to document these violations.

We reject the generalization made in this report, which discriminates against Palestinians for speaking out against ongoing human rights violations in the digital space and on the ground alike. The adoption of such a report categorizes a group of journalists, media organizations, and civil society partner organizations as either being antisemitic or of spreading a one-sided narrative in covering the region. This will harm, not help, our collective struggle against intolerance, hatred and racism in the region.

Moreover, we reject and point out the lack of professionalism demonstrated by the formation of an unobjective investigation committee, in addition to its unprofessional procedure in the process of preparing this report. The committee itself lacked diversity and consisted of no experts in anti-racism issues. Moreover, the targeted DWA partner organizations were offered no consultancy on the issue and no right of reply to discuss the content of the accusations. They were instead informed hours before the report release that they and their organizations would be included in the report, and their partnerships with DWA would be impacted.

Through the utilization of this biased and one-sided framework, it is clear that DW's investigation committee's intention is to silence Palestinians and falsely define any criticism of Israeli policies as antisemitism. We demand that DW and DWA immediately take the following actions:

- Retract the biased report and end the smear campaign.
- Form an objective, non-biased committee made of anti-racism experts to investigate any wrongdoing, and consult with the journalists and Palestinian partner organizations.
- Commit to freedom of expression and the adoption of a less biased antisemitism definition endorsed by both Jewish and Palestinian human rights defenders, such as the [Jerusalem Declaration on antisemitism](#).
- Allow political debate free of all forms of racism and hate, including antisemitism and islamophobia.

DW can no longer continue to claim to be a champion of free speech if it continues to make slanderous statements against Palestinians to silence them. It is time for DW to stand with oppressed people and amplify their voices.

Signatories:

1. Tamleh- The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media
2. Jewish Voices for Peace
3. Nisaa Broadcasting Radio Company
4. Women Media and Development (TAM)
5. PYALARA
6. European Legal Support Center (ELSC)
7. MPower Change
8. Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)
9. Adalah Justice Project
10. Naamod
11. National Students for Justice in Palestine
12. Palästinensische Gemeinde Deutschland e.V
13. Free Speech on Israel (UK)
14. International Center of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP), London
15. Artists for Palestine UK
16. SMEX
17. Adalah Center
18. INSM - Iraq
19. EL Nadim center for psychological rehabilitation for victims of violence
20. Masaar-Technology and Law Community
21. The Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy
22. The Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council
23. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy
24. Women's Studies center
25. Arab American University
26. Palestinian Working Women Society for Development
27. The Center for Women's Legal Researches, Counselling and Protection
28. Women Affairs Center - Gaza
29. South Women Media Forum
30. The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA)
31. Palestinian Women Development Society
32. Altufula (NNI)
33. Community Media Center
34. FILASTINIYAT
35. Women's Studies Center
36. Center for Women's Legal Research, Counseling and Protection

37. Center for Defense of Liberties & Civil Rights "Hurriyat"
38. Roles For Social Change Association - ADWAR
39. Psycho Social Counseling Center For Women "PSCCW"
40. Community Media Network
41. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
42. Land Research Center
43. The Alternative Syndicate of the Press
44. Arab Agronomists Association
45. Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling
46. Defense for Children International/ Palestine
47. Joint Advocacy Initiative
48. MA'AN Development Center
49. Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center
50. MASARAT
51. Alrowwad Cultural and Arts Society
52. ADWAR Association
53. Eyewitness Palestine
54. Work health committees WHC
55. Women Against Violence
56. Palestine speaks
57. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy - MIFTAH
58. Center for Defense of Liberties & Civil Rights "Hurriyat"
59. Palestine weather website
60. Arab Center for Agriculture Development
61. The Civil Commission for the Independence of Judiciary and Rule of Law
62. BuildPalestine
63. Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development "PWWSD"
64. Kayan - Feminist organization
65. Human Rights & Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"
66. AL-JANA Center
67. Sada Social
68. Al-Haq
69. Union Of Agricultural Work Committees
70. YWCA-Palestine
71. The East Jerusalem YMCA
72. Institute for Palestine studies
73. JLAC- Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center
74. Teacher Creativity Center
75. Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in the Middle East and North Africa
76. Palestinian Non Governmental Organizations Network
77. Karama
78. Kadirat
79. Tamer institute for community education

80. British Committee for the Universities of Palestine
81. Kairos Palestine
82. Palestinian Youth Ecumenical Movement
83. UAF
84. Al Saraya Center for Community Service
85. Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO)
86. Saqi Books
87. Assiwar feminist arab organization
88. Israelisches Komitee gegen Hauszerstörungen (ICAHD)
89. l'lam - Arab Center for Media Freedom Development and Research
90. Palestinian Vision (PalVision)
91. Fada - Palestinian Women Against Violence
92. Palestinian Journalists Syndicate
93. Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC)
94. Cultural Forum Center
95. Palestinian Counseling Center
96. Health Work Committees
97. Station J
98. Burj Alluqluq
99. The Arab Culture Association
100. Social Media Club-Palestine
101. Palästina Forum Nahost Frankfurt/M.