

**BETWEEN ACTIVISM
AND THE GLORIFICATION
OF TERRORISM: PFLP
FRONT ORGANIZATIONS
IN THE EUROPEAN
PUBLIC SPHERE**

Rebecca Schönenbach

Between Activism and the Glorification of Terrorism: PFLP Front Organizations in the European Public Sphere

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1. Introduction

On 23 August 2019, 17-year-old Rina Shnerb was killed by a bomb while hiking in the West Bank. Investigations by Israeli security forces revealed that the masterminds and perpetrators of the terrorist attack were members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)¹, an organisation that has also been designated as a terrorist organisation by the European Union since 2001.²

Whilst Israeli security authorities had already uncovered links between the PFLP and various non-profit organisations (NPOs) in the months prior to the murder, it was only through the investigations into the Rina Shnerb case that the central role these NPOs play for the PFLP became clear.³

Whereas the PFLP had previously been regarded as an organisation that had gained prominence through terrorist activities in the 1970s and 1980s but had since barely made an appearance, this picture changed abruptly.

Not only did it become apparent that the PFLP remained capable of carrying out terrorist attacks, but also that the terrorist organisation had carved out a new niche for itself on the political spectrum. Members of the PFLP who were released in 2011 as part of an agreement between the Israeli government and the terrorist organisation Hamas regarding the handover of the hostage Gilad Shalit in exchange for the release of convicted prisoners found employment.

¹ <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/idf-police-arrest-terrorists-who-murdered-rina-shnerb-603218>

² Quelle sehe Paper Finanziars

³ <https://www.lawandisrael.org/themencode-pdf-viewer/?file=https://www.lawandisrael.org/wp-content/uploads/Topics/Terrorism/PFLP/PolicyNote112Levitt.pdf#zoom=page-height&pagemode=bookmarks>

These NPOs operate in the field of human rights or, for example, in the medical aid sector, yet they employed convicted terrorists. This highlighted a strategy that could be described as a “humanisation strategy”. On the one hand, this involves establishing radical objectives as legitimate political positions in Europe under the guise of human rights activism; on the other hand, it aims to secure funding for the PFLP through European funds.

This study examines the operational and propaganda activities of front organisations of the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** in Europe and their associated networks. It focuses on how these actors utilise ideological, structural and financial networks to embed their agenda within civil society and media spheres. The methodological basis consists of analyses of think tanks, security reports and source evaluations on the intertwining of activism and support for terrorism.

The PFLP, which is designated as a terrorist organisation by the United States, the European Union, Canada and Israel, has maintained a presence in Europe through various organisational structures since its founding in 1967. An understanding of the current activities of front organisations linked to the PFLP in Europe, particularly in Germany, is of crucial importance for counter-terrorism, raising awareness within civil society and the academic understanding of transnational militant networks.

2. History of the PFLP from its origins to the present day

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), founded in 1967, is a Marxist-Leninist, pan-Arab organisation that views the Palestinian struggle as part of a global anti-imperialist and social-revolutionary project. Its strategic goal is the “liberation” of all of Palestine⁴ and the establishment of a secular Palestinian state across the entire historical territory, coupled with a comprehensive social transformation in favour of the “working classes”.

⁴ https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_palestinian_politics/popular_front_for_the_liberation_of_palestine/

According to investigative journalist Yevgenia Albats, as reported by US analyst Jon B. Perdue, there was at least one meeting in 1974 between the then Soviet secret service, the KGB, and the then leader of the PFLP, Wadi Haddad, in Libya. According to the documents analysed by Albats, contact—and thus also support—from the Soviet Union for the PFLP had existed since 1968, as the Soviet leadership saw the PFLP as an opportunity to expand the anti-imperialist struggle. The support ranged from logistical assistance to the supply of weapons.⁵

In the 1970s, the PFLP carried out terrorist attacks in Western countries; the terrorist organisation became notorious for its targeted aircraft hijackings, which were initially planned by Haddad himself. The 1976 hijacking to Entebbe by the PFLP was led by the German terrorist Wilfried Böse.⁶ Historically, the movement has had links to the Red Army Faction (RAF) in Germany and other parts of Europe, particularly Switzerland. For instance, the then PFLP spokesman Bassam Abu-Sharif recruited RAF members Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. Abu Sharif said of his success with young Westerners:

“Haddad’s spectacular actions proved that a relatively small group of committed and well-organised people could strike a blow against the West and get away with it. This had the effect of a magnet on these budding Che Guevaras. Many of them hated the machinery of capitalism deeply; the power of big corporations and big governments that crushed the spirit of the individual. They wanted freedom and power. And they hooked their revolutionary aspirations onto the hook called Palestine.”⁷

⁵ Siehe Jon B. Purdue (2012), „The War Of All The People – The Nexus of Latin American Radicalism and Middle Eastern Terrorism“, Seite 25 ff.

⁶ <https://web.stanford.edu/group/tomzgroup/pmwiki/uploads/1377-1976-08-KS-a-RCW.pdf>

⁷ Im Original: “Haddad’s spectaculars proved that a relatively small number of committed and well-organized people could kick the West up the backside and get away with it. This was a like a magnet to these fledgling Che Guevaras. Many of them really hated the machinery of capitalism; the power of big business and big government, which crushed the spirit of the individual. They wanted freedom and power. And they hung their revolutionary aspirations on the peg of Palestine.” Jon B. Perdue (2012): “The War of All the People: The Nexus of Latin American Radicalism and Middle Eastern Terrorism,” Page 47

The PFLP has managed to maintain this ideological link; although its militant influence has waned, its symbolic and ideological significance within anti-colonial discourse has endured—indeed, in parts of the far-left spectrum, it is stronger today than it was in the 1990s. For example, the convicted PFLP terrorist Leila Khaled, responsible for two aircraft hijackings, is today celebrated within the far-left spectrum as a pioneer of a feminist women’s movement and, in this capacity, is invited to conferences in Europe as well, for instance to the European Parliament in 2017, even though Khaled continues to hold fast to her convictions.⁸

Despite the obviously ongoing ideological connection, academic research on the PFLP is dominated by historical studies dealing with the organisation’s activities during the Cold War, its ideological development and its role within the broader Palestinian “liberation movement”.

In his 2017 PhD thesis at the University of Edinburgh, Francesco Saverio Leopardi analyses the marginalisation of the PFLP within the Palestinian movements between 1982 and 2007. Leopardi comes to the following conclusion:

“In the 1990s, there were persistent fundamental contradictions in the PFLP’s political work, linked to the unprecedented challenges that emerged in the first half of that decade. In its response to the crisis of global Marxism, the PFLP leadership adopted a conservative approach, in which adherence to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the absence of organisational renewal were attributable to the continuing influence of a bureaucratised leadership on the PFLP. Self-preservation also characterised the PFLP’s response to the 1993 Oslo Accords, as integration into the framework of the PLO undermined its efforts to counteract the peace process.”

⁸ <https://www.ikg-wien.at/nachrichten/jmf-auftritt-einer-terroristin-im-europaeischen-parlament>

Despite its calls for the formation of a broad front against Oslo, for the mobilisation of the grassroots and for the revival of national institutions, the PFLP's actions reflected a prioritisation of institutional politics and factional calculations over coalition-building, as well as elitist political manoeuvring and increasing integration into the very system against which the PFLP purportedly stood. These dynamics were clearly evident in the dispute with its Islamist partners within the Alliance of Palestinian Forces.

The lack of ideological flexibility noted by Leopardi following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the aftermath of the 1993 Gulf War, after which the PFLP lost its base in Lebanon, is today also criticised by leading figures such as Khaled Barakat, a member of the PFLP's Politburo and founder of one of the front organisations analysed below, Masar Badil. However, Barakat emphasises, for example in an interview with the far-left Swiss podcast *Radio Résistance* in 2025, that the shift to the diaspora has led to a rethinking within the movement.

⁹ Im Original: "During the 1990s, the persistence of fundamental contradictions in the PFLP's policy production combined with the unprecedented challenges that emerged during the first half of this decade. In its response to the crisis of global Marxism, the PFLP leadership displayed a conservative approach in which adherence to the tenets of Marxist-Leninism and a lack of organisational renewal stemmed from the continued grip on the PFLP of a bureaucratised leadership.

Self-conservatism also influenced the PFLP's response to the 1993 Oslo accords as integration into the PLO framework compromised its efforts to counter the peace process. Notwithstanding its calls for the establishment of a broad front against Oslo, grassroots mobilisation, and revival of national institutions, the PFLP's agency reflected the prioritisation of institutional politics and factional calculation over coalition building, elitist political manoeuvring and a growing integration into the system the PFLP claimed to oppose. These dynamics appeared clear in the dispute with its Islamist partners within the Alliance of Palestinian forces, in the divergences with its OPT cadres, and in the individual reintegration into the post-Oslo system that the PFLP and the DFLP sought after the failure of the Unified Leadership.» Francesco Saverio Leopardi (2017): "The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Decline (1982-2007).

Political Agency and Marginalisation.", Seite 289 <https://era.ed.ac.uk/server/api/core/bitstreams/0ff14f1c-e107-4bc6-9985-219736b31fca/content>

¹⁰ <https://open.spotify.com/episode/383EZmyNdVvVVYf1yrnCSE?si=G93KluiuTf-nWbRHcg2JGA>

Khaled Barakat, a Canadian citizen of Palestinian origin, and his wife, the American Charlotte Kates, international coordinator of the organisation Samidoun—which has been banned in Germany since 2023—spent several years in Berlin, presumably from 2016 until their deportation, the decision for which was issued in 2019 and became final in 2020.¹¹

The consequences of the couple's networking activities in Germany have become particularly apparent since the Hamas massacre in 2023. The PFLP appears to be expanding its activities from propaganda work towards active coordination with Hamas, the PIJ and Hezbollah¹², as outlined below and as Barakat himself stated in the aforementioned 2025 interview.

Attacks by the PFLP and its front groups are also becoming more likely again. For example, in 2024, the "Marc Rudin Commando" carried out an arson attack in Switzerland against the US Consulate¹³, accompanied by a letter of claim. Marc Rudin was a Swiss PFLP terrorist who not only worked as a graphic designer for the PFLP but also fought on the front lines for the PFLP for several years. After serving a prison sentence in Denmark (following an attack), he returned to Switzerland and helped to establish, among other things, the organisation Roter Aufbau. Against this background, the "Kommando Marc Rudin" can be regarded as a claim of responsibility by the PFLP. According to the perpetrators, the purpose of the attack was to send a "fiery greeting to the struggling peoples from Palestine to Kurdistan".

The PFLP has been classified as a terrorist organisation by the EU since 2002.¹⁴ Its front organisation Samidoun, which, according to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, was founded in 2011 by PFLP members based abroad,¹⁵ was only banned in Germany following the distribution of sweets to celebrate the Hamas massacre¹⁶ in November 2023.¹⁷

¹¹ <https://www.mena-watch.com/berlin-weist-funktionaer-der-terrororganisation-pflp-aus/>

¹² <https://democ.de/artikel/dossier-terrorpropaganda-fur-den-westen-masar-badil/>

¹³ <https://barrikade.info/article/6292>

¹⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002157_EN.html

¹⁵ <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/hintergruende/DE/auslandsbezogener-extremismus/samidoun.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/samidoun-tarnung-fuer-terror-106121/>

¹⁷ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2023/11/vereinsverbot-hamas-samidoun.html>

3. The Shift to the West: Propaganda, Activism and Ideological Networks

Charlotte Kates, international coordinator of the **Palestinian Prisoners Solidarity Network (Samidoun)**, spoke in 2018 at what was then the largest demonstration against racism in Germany, organised by Amnesty International and others. Under the slogan #Unteilbar, Samidoun marched, according to its own statements, alongside the MLPD, a small Marxist-Leninist party in Germany, Rebell (a left-wing youth organisation affiliated with the MLPD), and ATIF (Federation of Turkish Workers in Germany), organised under the leadership of the youth organisation Hirak e.V. and several other Palestinian activists.¹⁸ Hirak e.V., Palestinian Youth Mobilisation Youth Movement (Germany), has also been banned in Germany since November 2023 as a subsidiary organisation of Samidoun.

In its statement of 2 November 2023 regarding Samidoun, the Federal Ministry of the Interior justified the ban by stating that the organisation is directed against the idea of international understanding, impairs and endangers the peaceful coexistence of Germans and foreigners and of various groups of foreigners within the federal territory, public order, and other significant interests of the Federal Republic of Germany, advocates the use of violence as a means of enforcing political demands and incites such violence,¹⁹ and supports associations that instigate, advocate, or threaten attacks against persons or property.

With this orientation, Samidoun would be diametrically opposed to the objectives of demonstrations against racism and other activities that advocate legitimate political goals. However, whilst the language Samidoun has cultivated over recent years remains faithful in substance to the original objectives of the PFLP, it employs terms derived from post-colonial academic discourse and reinterprets these terms in line with the PFLP's ideology.

¹⁸ <https://samidoun.net/2018/10/palestine-contingent-at-unteilbar-demonstration-in-berlin-fights-racism-faces-right-wing-attacks/>

¹⁹ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2023/11/vereinsverbot-hamas-samidoun.html>

Mohammed Khatib, Samidoun's Europe coordinator, explains in a 2025 interview with the Swiss podcast *Radio Résistance*:

“All these post-colonial struggles hold great potential to unite the Left, progressive movements and young people in Europe against racism, against fascism and against the newly emerging far-right governments. But it is certainly the case that Palestine is, in a sense, at the forefront of these struggles, not because the Palestinian people are important. It is because our enemy, the Zionist enemy, is very important to the Western enemy. The State of Israel is very important to the EU and the United States of America, and Israel is, in a sense, a testing ground for these far-right organisations—a testing ground for weapons, checkpoints and new methods and structures of oppression. That is why we should focus on the State of Israel, for Israel is, in a sense, a new model of a settler-colonial state, like the USA, Canada and Australia. The destruction of Israel and the dismantling of this colonial system in Palestine holds the potential to dismantle the other, larger colonies in the world as well.”²⁰

²⁰ Im Original: «All of those post-colonial struggles are a big potential to unite the left, the progressive causes and the youth in Europe against racism, against fascism and the local new emerging far-right governments. But for sure, Palestine (is) kind of on the first front of these struggles, not because the Palestinian people are important. This is because our enemy, the Zionist enemy, is very important for the Western enemy. The state of Israel is very important for the EU and the United States of America and Israel is kind of laboratory for this far right-wing organisations. Laboratory on testing arms, testing check points and new methods, structures of oppression. So that is why we should focus on the state of Israel because Israel kind of new model of settler colonial state, like the US, Canada, Australia, so destroying Israel, dismantling this colonial system in Palestine is the potential to dismantle the other greater bigger colonies in the world.”, Podcast Radio Résistance (2025): Interview with Mohammed Khatib, the European Coordinator for the Palestinian Prisoners Rights Samidoun. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/1FjJz4kSn8ih7QQxbuTgnA?si=Kq-JbFwSTKS7Sq3ycg1xew&pi=95Suev8HSQq22&nd=1&dlsi=8e98f34556b54590>

For Samidoun and other PFLP front organisations, Israel is not only seen as a symbol of a racist, colonial and oppressive system, but also as the key to bringing this system down worldwide. According to statements made by PFLP front organisations in the West, the struggle against Israel is therefore the solution to all the problems they believe have been created by imperialist forces, such as colonialism and racism.

With this in mind, Samidoun activists have for years sought to connect with groups in Germany committed to the traditional goals of left-wing movements; the #Unteilbar demonstration serves as a stepping stone to legitimise themselves.

For example, in 2020 the group “Studis gegen Rechte Hetze” organised an online seminar with Samidoun Germany on the topic “The Importance of the Student Movement in Confronting Colonialism”.²¹ The Amadeu Antonio Foundation (AAS) points to the collaboration between the organisation Rote Hilfe and Samidoun, whose activists have repeatedly received legal aid, including fundraising campaigns, through Rote Hilfe. This is not an isolated case, the AAS explains:

“Samidoun is courted by many left-wing groups. In an article published following the Hamas attack on Saturday, the Trotskyist splinter group ‘Marx21’ within the Die Linke party advocates for a collaboration with groups such as ‘Samidoun’ and ‘Palästina Spricht’. ‘The Left Berlin’, an international English-speaking group that emerged from Die Linke, has also promoted Samidoun on its website in the past—complete with a donation link. The Trotskyist blog ‘Klasse gegen Klasse’ published a statement by Samidoun in April 2023, and an interview with a Samidoun activist was published in September. Also in September, Samidoun was a guest at the autonomous housing project Rigaer 94 to present its campaign against the political oppression of Palestinians.”²²

²¹ The Importance of the Student Movement in Confronting Colonialism”

²² <https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/samidoun-tarnung-fuer-terror-106121/>

In 2022, the spokesperson for a local branch of Fridays for Future and a board member of the association Donate for Future e.V. called for participation in a demonstration organised by Samidoun and banned by the authorities responsible for regulating public gatherings.²³

Finally, various groups jointly sign appeals issued by Samidoun, including one in 2022 against a ban on the 'Nakba' demonstration in Berlin, where 'Nakba' means 'catastrophe', the term used by anti-Israeli movements to describe the founding of Israel. These include groups such as Linksjugend Solid Nord-Berlin, Young Struggle, Migrantifa Berlin, the Stuttgart Palestine Committee, Klasse gegen Klasse and Kommunistischer Aufbau.²⁴

Through the groups in this network, Samidoun reaches out to other groups that campaign against homophobia, for example; thus, Palestine Speaks and Young Struggle took part in a demonstration in Berlin for Queer Pride in 2022, at which, according to the Jewish Forum for Democracy and Against Anti-Semitism e.V., activists from the BDS campaign were also present,²⁵ an acronym for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, a movement that seeks the economic destruction of Israel. Together, the groups hijack the demonstration against homophobia organised by the "Internationalist Queer Pride" Alliance (IQP) with their own bloc.

The Stuttgart Palestine Committee, for its part, took part in an anti-racist event in February 2023 intended to commemorate the terrorist attack in Hanau.²⁶ Also in relation to the racist terrorist attack in Hanau, the group Migrantifa Berlin posted a tile on Instagram in January 2023 claiming that the German police were harassing migrant youths, displacing families and murdering siblings.²⁷

²³ https://www.focus.de/panorama/brisantes-video-im-netz-anti-israel-sumpf-immer-tiefer-fridays-sprecherin-rief-zu-verbotener-demo-auf_id_227190681.html

²⁴ <https://samidoun.net/2022/05/berlin-bans-nakba-commemorations-united-against-repression-united-for-freedom-and-justice/>

²⁵ <https://www.jfda.de/post/die-normalisierung-von-antisemitismus-auf-iqp>

²⁶ https://www.instagram.com/p/CoSEbkCs3xn/?img_index=2

²⁷ https://www.instagram.com/p/Cn1rDJIsFyN/?img_index=2&igsh=a2RrNGY4OGlnOWJp

By framing issues such as climate protection, anti-racism, and the fight against queerphobia and homophobia, Samidoun and its activist network seek to connect with groups outside the anti-Israel scene through the emotionalised framing of legitimate concerns, thereby creating a broad anti-imperialist movement. However, the aim remains to exert a radicalising influence directed against Israel and the 'Zionist' European constitutional systems equated with Israel. This became clear shortly after the Hamas attack, in which over 1,000 people were murdered, crimes such as rape and torture were systematically committed, and over 250 people were abducted.

Samidoun's first high-profile gathering in Europe following the Hamas massacre on 7 October 2023 took place as early as 24 October 2023 in a left-wing pub in Geneva, Switzerland, organised by the local branch of the internationally active far-left group Rote Hilfe, Secours Rouge Genève. Charlotte Kates, Mohammed Khatib and Khaled Barakat, joining via video link, made it clear that they regard state structures in Europe as Zionist entities that are legitimate targets. In response to a question from a member of the audience asking whether forms of resistance such as dancing, writing and other artistic activities were not also important, Khatib replied that whilst all forms of resistance were important, the highest form remained armed resistance. Furthermore, Kates praised European examples of groups using violence, such as Palestine Action in the UK, which could serve as examples of meaningful action.

The fact that Samidoun does not rely solely on artistic activities and violence as opposing poles, but also on the influence of non-governmental organisations, is demonstrated, among other things, by the investigations following the murder of Rina Shnerb mentioned at the outset.

4. The Role of Front Organisations: Al-Haq and Related Structures

In recent years, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have come under scrutiny in relation to the financing of terrorism, not only in areas where a terrorist organisation is in control—such as Hamas in Gaza or the Taliban in Afghanistan—but also in high-risk areas where aid can be diverted to terrorist organisations, such as Yemen.²⁹

²⁸ <https://www.audiatour-online.ch/2023/11/01/radikalisierungsfreiheit-in-der-schweiz-samidoun-koennte-migrieren/>

²⁹ <https://www.counterextremism.com/content/houthi-diversion-humanitarian-assistance-yemen>

However, the focus was mostly on the possibility that organisations might act unwittingly or tolerate some degree of misappropriation in order to continue providing aid. NPOs whose purpose is not only to secure funding for terrorist organisations but also to export their ideological agenda to other countries only came under scrutiny in Israel following the PFLP's terrorist attack on the Shnerb family.

Even before the murder, the Israeli government had published the report *"Terrorists in Suits – The Ties Between NGOs Promoting BDS and Terrorist Organisations"* in 2019, which highlighted the links between various NPOs and terrorist organisations. The report explains Samidoun's personnel links with the PFLP in detail, though it mentions only the funding of PFLP cadres such as Khaled Barakat and the promotion of the BDS campaign, which is presented separately with its own organisational links to the umbrella organisation of Palestinian terrorist organisations, the Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine (PNIF).³⁰

One of the other organisations listed is Al-Haq,³¹ which, like Samidoun, reportedly has direct links to the PFLP. According to the report, the current director of Al-Haq, Jawan Jabarin, has been sentenced to prison terms in Israel on several occasions for his activities on behalf of the PFLP. Furthermore, Jabarin is said to have employed several other convicted PFLP terrorists at Al-Haq following their release from prison. Al-Haq's international activities are also only briefly mentioned in the report, primarily its legal support for international proceedings against Israel and its BDS work.

Internationally, Al-Haq is regarded as one of the oldest Palestinian human rights organisations, founded in 1979 in the West Bank. According to the report, the organisation was funded by, among others, the European Union (EU) and EU member states such as the Netherlands, as well as by the Swiss government. The report mentions two organisations linked to Al-Haq with which the organisation has also been active in Germany: the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) and the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights (Al Mezan).³²

³⁰ https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/terrorists_in_suits/en/De-Legitimization%20Brochure.pdf

³¹ <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/27255.html>

³² https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/terrorists_in_suits/en/De-Legitimization%20Brochure.pdf,

According to its own statements, the **Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)** opposes the Oslo peace process, as, according to the PCHR's legal analysis, it fails to resolve the fundamental issues: the right to self-determination for Palestinians, the right to a state of their own with Jerusalem as its capital, the right of return for all Palestinian refugees, and the removal of all illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, although these territories are not specified.³³ According to the Israeli think tank NGO Monitor, the PCHR also has links to the PFLP through several of its (former) leaders.³⁴ Furthermore, the PCHR has reportedly received funding from the EU, most recently €475,000 in 2023/2024 for the protection of human rights, as well as funds from, among others, Ireland, Norway and Spain.

The **AI Mezan Centre for Human Rights (AI Mezan)** was founded in 1999, according to its own information, and sees the legal defence of human rights as its mission, in particular that of victims of human rights violations, with a special focus on Gaza.³⁵ According to a 2020 report by NGO Monitor on AI Mezan, leading figures from AI Mezan met on several occasions in various constellations with PFLP cadres or attended PFLP events.³⁶ Also according to NGO Monitor, AI Mezan received funding from the EU, including as a subordinate partner of other NPOs.³⁷

The three organisations—AI-Haq, PCHR and AI Mezan—jointly filed a lawsuit alleging human rights violations against various members of the Israeli army who hold dual citizenship. In July 2025, they filed a lawsuit in France against two French citizens, together with the **International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)**, the **Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH)** and the **Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS)**.

³³ <https://pchrgaza.org/philosophy/>

³⁴ https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/palestinian_center_for_human_rights_pchr/

³⁵ <https://www.mezan.org/en/page/11/About-Us>

³⁶ https://www.ngo-monitor.org/pdf/AI_Mezan_0820.pdf

³⁷ https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/al_mezan_center_for_human_rights/

According to the organisations themselves, the complaint is based on material provided by the Palestinian journalist Younis Tirawi, which the organisations involved have substantiated through their own investigations.³⁸

In Germany, AI-Haq, PCHR and AI Mezan filed a similar complaint against a German national in September 2025, in collaboration with the **European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)** in Berlin. According to the ECCHR, the charges are based on visual material and evidence from investigative research.³⁹ In a separate document relating to the lawsuit, the ECCHR also refers to the research of journalist Younis Tirawi, as well as to other proceedings in France, Italy, Belgium and South Africa.⁴⁰

Whilst war crimes should, of course, be prosecuted, the systematic nature of the proceedings, the orientation of the organisations involved—AI-Haq, PCHR and AI Mezan—and their respective links to the terrorist organisation PFLP suggest that the lawsuits have a propagandistic rather than a legal basis. On the one hand, they are intended to make Israelis who are conscripted into military service fear that they could be prosecuted abroad solely on the basis of their military service; on the other hand, the organisations' media work creates a lasting impression in the public eye that Israeli soldiers commit war crimes, regardless of whether the respective defendants are actually convicted in court.

³⁸ <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/france/summary-executions-in-gaza-complaints-filed-against-dual-national>

³⁹ <https://www.ecchr.eu/en/press-release/alleged-war-crimes-in-gaza-criminal-complaint-filed-in-germany-against-a-member-of-the-israeli-army/>

⁴⁰ https://www.ecchr.eu/fileadmin/Q_As/QA_ECCHR_Ghost_Case_en.pdf

In autumn 2025, the accused Munich-based soldier was the subject of reports in Germany by *Spiegel* magazine⁴¹ and the broadcaster ZDF's *Frontal* programme⁴², which were also based, amongst other things, on information provided by Younis Tirawi.

*Addendum: In early February 2026, it emerged that the individual concerned was taking legal action against the reports. According to the lawyer representing the Israeli-German soldier, his client was neither at the stated location nor a member of the described unit during the period in question.*⁴³

Due to the reporting by prominent media outlets, the soldier—whose name was abbreviated but cited in full by the media outlets' international partner organisations—was identified on social media. Consequently, the individual concerned and his family must expect that they will no longer be able to live in safety in Germany, even if the courts ultimately determine that the dual national did not commit any war crimes. This prejudgement, or lifelong media-driven vigilante justice, is the aim of the PFLP's front organisations, which is intended not only to harm the individual concerned but also to delegitimise Israel as a constitutional state, in line with the goal presented by Khatib of "smashing the colonial system". Furthermore, this strategy deliberately accepts that radicalised individuals might also resort to physical violence against the "doxxed" person.

In doing so, organisations with links to the PFLP involve renowned organisations in the respective countries, which lends credibility to their actions. The ECCHR became well known in Germany because it succeeded in having crimes committed under the Assad regime prosecuted and sentenced abroad for the first time.⁴⁴

⁴¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7UCLw0bY58>

⁴² <https://www.zdf.de/video/dokus/frontal-die-doku-100/verdacht-von-kriegsverbrechen-gaza-israel-idf-deutscher-scharfschuetze-100>

⁴³ <https://www.fokus-jerusalem.tv/2026/02/03/falsche-kriegsverbrecher-vorwurfe-deutsch-israelischer-soldat-siegt-vor-gericht-gegen-medienhaeuser/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.ecchr.eu/fall/weltweit-erster-prozess-zu-staatsfolter-in-syrien-vor-dem-olg-koblenz/>

The ECCHR was founded in Berlin in 2007 as an independent human rights organisation and, since then, has not only represented victims of human rights violations in legal proceedings but, according to its own statements, also seeks to raise awareness of human rights violations worldwide through accompanying public relations work.⁴⁵

Whilst this description and the organisation's long-standing work are consistent with human rights activities, it is striking, in connection with its collaboration with AI-Haq, PCHR and AI Mezan, that the ECCHR does not shy away from working with organisations that have clear links to a group responsible for attacks resulting in deaths, including in Europe.

In the case of the ECCHR, collaboration with the PFLP's sphere of influence is not limited to the lawsuit against a Munich resident. On the one hand, in line with the ideological stance of its partners, the ECCHR seeks, through legal channels, to halt or delay arms deliveries to Israel.⁴⁶ On the other hand, it maintains a long-term collaboration with an organisation that also has links to AI-Haq and thus to the PFLP. In 2020, the ECCHR founded the "Investigative Commons" project together with the British organisation **Forensic Architecture** and its German sister organisation **Forensis**, which is intended to facilitate an interdisciplinary approach to specific projects.⁴⁷ Contrary to what the name suggests, however, Forensic Architecture does not work with forensic analysis, but processes visual material in a way that creates the impression of scientific rigour. According to the daily newspaper *taz*, Forensic Architecture (FA) uses "strategies of visual manipulation to suggest the scientific nature of its investigations and generate authenticity". The *taz* further writes in 2024: "Under the guise of scientific objectivity, Forensic Architecture regularly takes sides. On the basis of purported forensic factuality, the investigations into the Middle East conflict perpetuate a Palestinian victim and Israeli perpetrator narrative."⁴⁸ The founder of FA, Israeli citizen Eyal Weizman, himself wrote in 2014 in a volume for Berlin's Haus der Kulturen der Welt that he understands forensics as a political practice and wishes to expand the "narrowing" down to medical and scientific categories as the basis of jurisprudence into an aesthetic interpretation.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ <https://www.ecchr.eu/ecchr/mit-juristischen-mitteln-menschenrechte-verteidigen/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.ecchr.eu/fall/keine-deutschen-waffen-nach-israel/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/investigative-commons/>

⁴⁸ <https://taz.de/Kritik-an-Forensic-Architecture!/5983353/>

⁴⁹ https://archiv.hkw.de/media/texte/pdf/publikationen_2/2021_2/forensis_the_architecture_of_public_truth.pdf

Weizman makes it clear in a 2024 interview with the British public broadcaster BBC that he interprets this as unequivocal partisanship. When asked whether his architectural analyses might not also help to track down the abducted Israeli hostages in Hamas’s tunnel network, Weizman replies that he does not, as a matter of principle, support any military operation, and that genocide is taking place in Gaza. When it was pointed out that the hostages were a human rights issue and not a matter of military support, Weizman stood by his position, thus refusing to assist Israeli civilians abducted by terrorists.⁵⁰ Whilst this stance contradicts the general interpretation of human rights work, it does not contradict the definition held by PFLP and Samidoun cadres such as Khatib, for the FA website states:

“We investigate states and companies—including armed forces, police forces, government agencies and firms—regarding their acts of violence, including repressive policing practices, civilian deaths in conflicts, structurally racist policymaking, violence against migrants and refugees, and historical and contemporary colonial violence, including the destruction of traditional habitats and living environments.”⁵¹

If Israel is viewed not as a constitutional state but as an agent of “colonial violence”, the human rights organisation’s stance becomes clear. In this context, FA collaborates with Al-Haq, for which, according to its own statements, FA spent a year and a half establishing a unit, the Forensic Architecture Investigation Unit (FAI Unit).⁵²

⁵⁰ https://open.spotify.com/episode/2arc4V2Ee0CYa6K6YXhMNT?si=CW3GrdeJSJ-8_7uJxuHhaw&nd=1&dlsi=f7a7f88a04d447cd

⁵¹ Im Original: «We investigate states and corporate entities—including militaries, police forces, government agencies, and companies—for their violent acts, including repressive policing, civilian deaths in conflict, structurally racist policy-making, violence against migrants and refugees, and historical and contemporary colonial violence, including the destruction of traditional environments and life worlds.” <https://forensic-architecture.org/about/agency>

⁵² <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-shelling-of-khudair-warehouse-chemical-warfare-by-indirect-means>

This snapshot of a much larger network illustrates how front organisations of the PFLP use human rights work as a cover to politically legitimise terrorist objectives. Actual terrorist organisations such as Hamas are not named as perpetrators; instead, in the case of Israel, only the victims are criminalised. Whilst Israel and its army should, of course, not be exempt from criticism or prosecution, these organisations—like their parent body, the terrorist organisation PFLP—are ultimately not concerned with combating injustice, but with the destruction of “colonial structures”, including constitutional systems in Europe. By choosing partners such as the ECCHR, which, alongside anti-Israeli activism, actually carries out human rights work, and through media coverage, the PFLP succeeds in establishing this “humanisation strategy” of terrorism via front organisations.

5. Links with European NGOs and Institutions

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Al-Haq, PCHR and Al Mezan are bringing similar legal actions in several European countries. However, in EU countries and neighbouring Switzerland, the legal defence of members of PFLP front organisations is generally handled by other organisations. As cited in Chapter 3, the Amadeu Antonio Foundation mentions the cooperation between Rote Hilfe in Germany and Samidoun. On 11 October 2023, the Federal Executive Committee of Rote Hilfe distanced itself from Samidoun, “as Samidoun refers positively and supportively to the Islamist-reactionary Hamas”.^{53,54}

In Switzerland, where neither the PFLP nor Samidoun have been banned to date, Rote Hilfe/Secours Rouge and Revolutionärer Aufbau⁵⁵—which is organisationally identical to Rote Hilfe—continue to cooperate with Samidoun.

⁵³ <https://rote-hilfe.de/meldungen/rote-hilfe-berlin-beendet-unterstuetzung-fuer-kampagne-gegen-ausweisung-des-samidoun>

⁵⁴ Korrektur der ersten Fassung des Dossiers. Der Bundesvorstand der Roten Hilfe hat sich bereits vor dem Verbot von Samidoun distanziert, anders als die Berliner Ortsgruppe der Roten Hilfe, die diese Distanzierung zurückwies: <https://berlin.rote-hilfe.de/2023/10/19/rote-hilfe-berlin-weist-distanzierungserklaerung-zurueck/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.aufbau.org/event/winterquartier-2/>

Not only did Secours Rouge organise a meeting in Geneva as a local group, but in January 2024, Revolutionärer Aufbau also hosted events in Zurich featuring Samidoun's EU coordinator, Khatib.⁵⁶

Furthermore, Revolutionärer Aufbau is participating in the "War on War" action week from 11–17 November 2024,⁵⁷ during which acts of resistance against "colonial violence" are taking place across Switzerland, including damage to property at UBS Bank, the NZZ newspaper and ETH Zurich University, as well as violence directed against individuals. Alongside property damage and the use of the Hamas triangle as a symbol of the enemy, a call is made for an "Intifada until victory", a clear reference to the terrorist movement that claimed the lives of hundreds of Israelis through bombings in the 2000s.⁵⁸

An attack involving fireworks rockets on FDP politician Christian Josi is documented online; in the claim of responsibility, he is described as a warmonger and militarist.⁵⁹ The attack is said to be in solidarity with Palestine, Rojava and the Philippines. Josi's address, along with his wife's name, is shared via video on the internet, making him an easy target for further attacks.⁶⁰

According to NGO Monitor, Samidoun collaborates in France with the organisation **Collectif Palestine Vaincra** and BDS groups,⁶¹ which in turn frequently cooperate with Secours Rouge in France.

⁵⁶ <https://www.aufbau.org/event/winterquartier-2/>

⁵⁷ https://www.aufbau.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/119_neu-2.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://vimeo.com/1031356601>

⁵⁹ <https://barrikade.info/article/6755>

⁶⁰ https://vimeo.com/1029050319?turnstile=0._TWSFgbhdknx68bHL0ZtPiVBVBYSaINFoAwcNNM1npValWZ1KbC1v65f95Yqq31YDnb0dhEANoyH7vpouAcPCN-JUykaloS3Xgf1A6oTnwpHyZgh-2k8G1vj5zzhWoeEDqElhyxZfVwObk4_LIUP4YcEJtDRMfOAc4glLa8OpoXoarFtokKg2Zv7AufjqRDGRPljh0kXk8su7ZCMFadnwOgFjtv9tHTxyO_bIML36iCaT4795BIRRVWRKT7IPxfoGEDXN6NOcfFmR_mvdeUo6A6Qo5W0ca1ZDSuc999KHKmSjFGuWVvKz7rRQx12l6CerqCnd0thQE5xZowioo5aXfcd-3YI_4F1CiDIAGw1VLAScmx7GPKZR8R49iqQluQDrRX5EHyPwVxvRWWhSz-nC4zshTYY7F2Fn37AGo_ItIdIMW_iS8r7TWULVoRrN2LwxtPOxoz820T3QaNhpUv3FO7xeKzquqvaf6RFcJEoyUmF_HLrIOOWe9CH-tgddPFByYz6OC4Ny_YGTDaUe7Oa5wmgassWbuBXqdZWEh4dukfHrNe6-xQJWzaM_Ok3wcfW4-PQI4sQIBwpJr9xAw9VdQP-QadbIBJ2lpdR3RRgo_V6E6VBa6682zWLB-wkUc8Svj4beqVJ9b4M5HdZgnhLn_ZmVngDI3nnGJRMXm2KEPaHfaSB7TcD9CiN_JEG9_LGWjSQ6j8v y59-RuM2PYWMOKOvHJbZtFpAB1iyq3XuyF4Phpmkd5f6HbaSFcgyDE81RBe7TGw3AxJGmEtF9PdntXxybJd_NbRB8mZzv6ntxu6jWkc8cJm2ovzg85Xu4a3awR0lmzUwnRl8d7XRX9LB_d4ZfVYu4kgr38eGM_YP68fGAdj2Dz2huDXq_C1RltyX9G_cJGQGXkwdst-G015JLg.RZhy91lebequ3YxFGTTchQ.00508d2fb57c32e9fbd7f28dc219f4e45b930be04acd439ce2b04a81a0 ef0a4b

⁶¹ <https://ngo-monitor.org/fr/le-site-internet-dun-collectif-francais-antisioniste-associe-a-une-organisation-nouvellement-designee-comme-terroriste-par-israel/>

Even after the official ban on Collectif Palestine Vaincra in January 2025, Secours Rouge Toulouse continues to protest against this measure.⁶² Alongside Rote Hilfe, which is classified by the Baden-Württemberg Office for the Protection of the Constitution as belonging to the far-left spectrum,⁶³ another organisation from the NGO sector, the Dutch foundation **European Legal Support Centre (ELSC)**, is involved in defending individuals or groups who have attracted attention through anti-Israeli activism.

One case with a direct link to Samidoun is the Stuttgart Palestine Committee, which signed joint statements with Samidoun⁶⁴ and organised an event in 2022 with the organisation's Europe coordinator, Mohammed Khatib.⁶⁵ With the support of the ELSC, **The Stuttgart Palestine Committee (Pako)** won two court cases in 2022: one concerning the closure of its own bank account and another regarding the removal of the organisation from the official website of the City of Stuttgart.⁶⁶

The cases were led by the lawyer Ahmed Abed, who frequently represents clients from the anti-Israel scene, gives interviews himself on supposedly pro-Palestinian issues,⁶⁷ and is currently standing as a mayoral candidate for the Left Party in Berlin-Neukölln.⁶⁸

According to its own statements, the ELSC was involved in Germany in proceedings against the media group Axel Springer, against Berliner Sparkasse regarding the freezing of a bank account for the anti-Zionist organisation "Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Middle East", on behalf of an activist named "Daria" regarding a banned slogan, on behalf of the activist Anna Younes against the organisation RIAS Berlin, as well as against the ban on "Nakba" demonstrations and in support of the Bundestag 3 for Palestine (BT3P) initiative.⁶⁹

⁶² <https://secoursrouge.org/toulouse-manifestation-contre-la-dissolution-du-collectif-palestine-vaincra/>

⁶³ https://www.verfassungsschutz-bw.de/Lde/Startseite/Arbeitsfelder/Rote+Hilfe+e_+V_

⁶⁴ <https://samidoun.net/2022/05/berlin-bans-nakba-commemorations-united-against-repression-united-for-freedom-and-justice/>

⁶⁵ <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article242463111/Wirbel-um-Palaestina-Seminar-in-Stuttgart.html>

⁶⁶ <https://elsc.support/de/case/activists-group-in-stuttgart-wins-two-cases-in-court-against-attempts-to-repress-them/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/germany-interior-ministers-report-palestinians/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/unruhe-bis-auf-bundesebene-eine-burgermeisterkandidatur-in-neukolln-wuhlt-die-linke-auf-15182408.html>

⁶⁹ <https://elsc.support/?s=Germany>

Furthermore, in 2024, the ELSC called for solidarity with Samidoun following the organisation's ban.⁷⁰ Samidoun also served as a prime example of "anti-Palestinian repression" for the ELSC, a project the ELSC is carrying out with Al-Haq's partner organisation, Forensis (or Forensic Architecture). The ELSC and Forensis jointly operate a database intended to document cases of anti-Palestinian repression in Germany since 2019.⁷¹ The project was presented at a press conference in May 2025,⁷² at which a victim spoke whose case was intended to illustrate the suppression of Palestinian interests in Germany. The individual in question was none other than Samidoun's Germany coordinator, Zid Tamim, who, according to an RBB report, described the Hamas massacre as the rebirth of the Palestinian resistance.⁷³

The database presented by Forensis, FA and ELSC was in turn shared on Instagram by the human rights organisation Amnesty Germany, in collaboration with Forensis and ELSC,⁷⁴ with the claim that it showed that "critics are to be silenced".

The ELSC, founded in 2019 on the initiative of European lawyers, the Palestinian network PNGO and the Dutch Rights Forum, has set itself the task of supporting the Palestinian solidarity movement in Europe through legal means.⁷⁵ On its website, it cites "strategic litigation" as a means to "break down the structures of complicity that support Israel's settlement project".⁷⁶ This strategy aligns with that of Al-Haq, PCHR and AI Mezan, as described in the fourth chapter.

The PNGO, Palestinian NGO Network, which launched the ELSC, is, according to NGO Monitor, linked to the PFLP through its personnel and organises conferences in which PFLP members participate. Nevertheless, according to research by NGO Monitor, it received financial support from the EU amounting to 1.3 million euros between 2021 and 2024.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ <https://elsc.support/shocking-levels-of-state-violence-and-repression-in-germany-palastina-solidaritat-duitburg-and-samidoun/>

⁷¹ <https://xn--www-3p23b.index-of-repression.org/platform>

⁷² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k26lmR4UgU&t=1263s>

⁷³ https://www.rbb-online.de/kontraste/ueber_den_tag_hinaus/extremisten/israel-hass-zwischen-solidaritaet-und-terror.html

⁷⁴ <https://www.instagram.com/p/DL-jN6rN9Bx/?igsh=MXNIY2NjazUyeHVjbw==>

⁷⁵ <https://elsc.support/about/>

⁷⁶ Ebenda. Im Original "dismantle the systems of complicity that sustain Israel's settler colonial project."

⁷⁷ [https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/palestinian_ngo_network_pngo_/](https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/palestinian_ngo_network_pngo/)

In doing so, the EU is not only potentially funding the activities of an organisation that is designated as a terrorist organisation in the EU, but is also indirectly funding the spread of that organisation's ideology across the Member States of the European Union. The network of PFLP organisations is creating an ecosystem in Europe that fosters radicalisation in line with the aims of Palestinian terrorist organisations and, as seen in Switzerland, ultimately leads to attacks.

6. Masar Badil: The Bridging Role to Other Extremist Networks

In October 2024, the democ association, which has set itself the task of monitoring anti-democratic movements, published an analysis of the organisation **Masar Badil**,⁷⁸ highlighting the following key points:

Masar Badil acts as a link between terrorist organisations and as a bridge between militant groups and Western supporters. Through online seminars and conferences, Masar Badil provides terrorist sympathisers in Europe with unique and direct access to high-ranking representatives of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the Yemeni Houthi rebels.

Masar Badil is closely linked, in terms of personnel and infrastructure, to the Samidoun network, which is banned in Germany. Leading figures from Masar Badil, such as Khaled Barakat, were active in Berlin before they were deported; other Masar Badil activists continue to live in Germany and organise propaganda campaigns from there.

Masar Badil completely rejects Israel's right to exist and refuses to engage in any peace negotiations or accept a two-state solution. The group calls for the "liberation of Palestine" from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea exclusively through armed resistance. The organisation celebrated the Hamas massacre of 7.

⁷⁸ <https://democ.de/masar-badil-terrorpropaganda-fuer-den-westen/>

October 2023 as “heroic” and “glorious”. To mark the anniversary, Masar Badil organised a conference in Madrid specifically to honour this attack.

Masar Badil explicitly aims to radicalise left-wing movements in the West as well as student protests on campus. For example, Masar Badil activists were involved in the occupation of a department at Humboldt University in Berlin in May 2024.

In the tradition of the terrorist PFLP, Masar Badil seeks to forge a broad alliance comprising the Palestinian diaspora, far-left actors and Islamist forces in order to form a united front against the Jewish state.

In summary, the dossier characterises Masar Badil as a dangerous propaganda platform that legitimises terrorist violence in the West and serves as a multiplier for the ideologies of militant groups in the Middle East, thereby also forming a bridge between the PFLP’s front organisations, its network in the NGO sector and in left-wing to far-left circles, and terrorist organisations in the Middle East.

7. Relations with the Iranian Regime and Transnational Alliances

Within PFLP circles, the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) is increasingly perceived as the central driving force behind a transnational “resistance project” against Israel, in which Palestinian organisations are embedded as an integral part. Analyses of Iran’s “Palestinian axis” show that, since the 1990s, the IRI has been systematically integrating left-wing nationalist and secular Palestinian groups—including PFLP offshoots—into a broader, ideologically anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist narrative. This convergence is based less on shared religious doctrine than on a common strategic framing of the armed struggle against Israel as “legitimate resistance” and on the acceptance of Iranian leadership claims within this camp.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ <https://mei.edu/publication/irans-axis-of-resistance-after-the-12-day-war-adaptation-restructuring-and-reconstitution/>

Empirical studies on Iran's network of Palestinian proxy militias indicate that, since the 1990s, Lebanese Hezbollah structures have continuously provided training, equipment and operational support to Palestinian organisations, including groups affiliated with the PFLP. It is documented that the PFLP was heavily dependent on Hezbollah infrastructure in Lebanon and operated in joint operations against Israel; Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah instructors acted as the central training and coordination authority in this regard. Against this background, it seems plausible to assume that PFLP cadres also received military training from Hezbollah instructors; relevant reports certainly attest to an extensive training regime run by Iran and Hezbollah for Palestinian groups in the areas of guerrilla warfare, rocketry and drone weaponry.⁸⁰ The Israeli government's 2019 dossier "*Terrorists in Suits*"⁸¹ also points to the training of PFLP terrorists by Hezbollah.

Transnational networks such as Samidoun and the Masar Badil spectrum have, since 2024/25, explicitly articulated their solidarity with the IRI and the "Axis of Resistance" led by it. In statements and calls to action, Iran, Hezbollah, the Houthis and pro-Iranian Syrian groups are portrayed as a united front against Israel and its Western allies; for instance, in 2024, Samidoun co-signed a statement by the "Committee of Anti-Imperialists in Solidarity with Iran",⁸² which hails Iran's military responses as a legitimate defence of the resistance camp. These discourses contribute to the further political and symbolic embedding of Palestinian actors within the Iranian regional architecture and reinforce the ideological convergence between PFLP-affiliated networks and the IRI.

Furthermore, state-run broadcasters in the IRI repeatedly propagate the ideas of the PFLP and Samidoun, including through interviews with Charlotte Kates.⁸³

⁸⁰ <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/captured-documents-show-iranian-support-for-hamas-in-the-gaza-strip/>

⁸¹ https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/terrorists_in_suits/en/De-Legitimization%20Brochure.pdf

⁸² <https://samidoun.net/2024/04/joint-statement-no-war-on-iran-solidarity-with-the-resistance/>

⁸³ <https://en-archive.almanar.com.lb/2385594>

In August 2024, Kates travels to Tehran to accept a “human rights award” that honours her alongside, among others, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who is being honoured posthumously.⁸⁴ In June 2025, Samidoun once again speaks out against “Zionist aggression” and expresses its solidarity with the regime in Iran.⁸⁵

Whilst the part of the PFLP network directly linked to the PFLP, such as Samidoun, consistently sides with the Iranian regime even during the IRI’s brutal crackdowns on its own population, organisations from the wider network, such as Young Struggle, campaign against external attacks on Iran but stand in solidarity with the Iranian people against the regime’s abuses.⁸⁶

8. Legal Situation and Measures

Due to its close ties to the PFLP and its advocacy of violence, Samidoun was designated a terrorist organisation in Israel in 2021. In Germany, the network was banned and dissolved by the Federal Ministry of the Interior on 2 November 2023, as it contravenes the principle of international understanding and provides propaganda support for the PFLP’s objectives. The PFLP has been classified as a terrorist organisation at European level since 2001, thereby prohibiting financial transactions, membership recruitment, the display of the organisation’s symbols, and radicalisation activities in line with the PFLP’s ideology in all EU Member States.

Nevertheless, Samidoun was able to establish a network in Germany and its neighbouring countries over the years with individuals such as Khaled Barakat, who, according to Israeli sources, belongs to the PFLP’s leadership cadre. Even today, following a national ban on its activities in Germany, organisations that emerged from Samidoun and the PFLP, such as Masar Badil, are able to continue operating in Germany despite direct contact with other terrorist organisations such as Hamas, which is also banned.

⁸⁴ <https://www.adl.org/resources/article/samidoun-what-you-need-know>

⁸⁵ <https://samidoun.net/2025/06/samidoun-condemns-u-s-zionist-aggression-on-iran-urges-solidarity-unity-and-action/>

⁸⁶ https://www.instagram.com/p/DTSclK4jCCP/?img_index=3&igsh=MWRmYTI5cnA3dXFzbnw%3D%3D

The fact that Germany—which is responsible at national level for implementing the sanctions—has failed to enforce the designation of the PFLP as a terrorist organisation was also demonstrated by the case of a German company that was still providing a server to the PFLP as recently as 2024.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, it is evident that the bans have a deterrent effect, at least within the NPO sector; for instance, Rote Hilfe distanced itself from the organisation following the ban on Samidoun and ceased providing active financial and legal support to Samidoun representatives. At the same time, a shift towards neighbouring countries such as Switzerland can be observed; Switzerland has not yet imposed any bans, apart from entry restrictions against members of Samidoun.⁸⁸

In addition to the danger that financial or other support could reach terrorist organisations such as Hamas and the PFLP directly via NPOs, there is a risk to internal security, particularly in Germany, as long as the bans on activities against members of Samidoun and organisations acting on Samidoun's behalf are not enforced. For example, as long as the (former) Germany coordinator of Samidoun can present his case at a press conference as oppression by the German state without fear of consequences—meaning that the PFLP and its network can spread propaganda aimed at radicalisation against constitutional structures—the PFLP network can continue its radicalisation work under the guise of human rights.

In addition to enforcing the bans, regulations should be considered that require the disclosure of the funding of non-profit associations and foundations. Disclosure requirements would not only shed light on the links between terrorist organisations and networks in Germany and the EU, but would also make it easier for state authorities to decide on funding, as transparency requirements would enable them to better assess the suitability of potential state partners.

To date, charitable associations are not obliged to make financial data or their activity reports available to the public. These are merely submitted to the relevant tax offices, which, however, usually only verify whether the documents have been submitted and whether the annual accounts appear plausible, but not whether the activities actually correspond to the stated charitable purpose.

The legislature should therefore consider ways of strengthening the scrutiny of charitable status. Organisations whose activities are aimed at undermining the rule of law and democracy should not be able to benefit from tax exemptions.

⁸⁷ <https://www.br.de/nachrichten/deutschland-welt/pflp-deutsche-infrastruktur-fuer-terrorpropaganda>,

⁸⁸ <https://www.aargauerzeitung.ch/schweiz/terrorismus-schweiz-verhaengt-einreiseverbot-gegen-prominenten-kopf-des-anti-israelischen-netzwerks-samidoun-ld.2627895>

9. Summary

The dossier, which could only analyse a small part of the PFLP's network, reveals a complex, multidimensional strategy on the part of the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)**, aimed at pursuing its radical goals through the targeted **exploitation of civil society spaces in Europe**. The following key patterns and structures can be identified:

- **Humanisation strategy and institutional mimicry:** A key pattern involves the employment of convicted PFLP members and cadres within the structures of non-profit non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These organisations, which often operate in the fields of human rights or medical aid, serve as a cover to establish radical political positions within European discourse as legitimate activism, whilst simultaneously securing access to European funding.
- **Semantic transformation and discourse piracy:** The sources reveal a deliberate adaptation of vocabulary. Whilst the PFLP's substantive objectives (such as the destruction of Israel) remain constant, terms from **post-colonial academic discourse** (e.g. "settler colonialism", "intersectionality", "apartheid") are adopted and reinterpreted in line with its own agenda. This enables them to connect with Western progressive movements.
- **Strategic alliances and cross-front formation:** PFLP front organisations (such as Samidoun or Masar Badil) systematically seek cooperation with groups from other social movements. By engaging with emotionally charged issues such as **climate protection, anti-racism or LGBTQ+ rights**, they succeed in building a broad anti-imperialist front and promoting their own radicalisation agenda in circles outside the traditional anti-Israel scene.
- **Legal strategy ("lawfare"):** A structural pattern is the use of the European legal system for propaganda purposes. In collaboration with renowned human rights organisations, lawsuits are brought, for example, against Israeli citizens for alleged war crimes. The aim of these proceedings appears to be less a legal conviction than a media-driven prejudgement and the **systematic delegitimisation of Israel** as a constitutional state.

- **Transnational hybrid networking:** These structures are characterised by a close intertwining of diaspora activism, European NGO work and militant networks in the Middle East. Organisations such as Masar Badil act as a bridge, providing terrorist sympathisers in Europe with direct access to senior members of Hamas, the PIJ or Hezbollah.
- **Ideological convergence with state actors:** There is evidence of the PFLP network becoming increasingly embedded within the “Axis of Resistance” led by the Islamic Republic of Iran. This structure is based on a strategic framing of the armed struggle against Israel as global anti-imperialist resistance, whereby ideological differences (Marxist-Leninist versus Islamist) take a back seat in favour of a united front.

Drawing on current sources, the dossier reveals a structure of “**apology for terrorism under the guise of activism**”, in which legal civil society means (NPOs, demonstrations, court proceedings) are used to make a violence-oriented, revolutionary agenda acceptable in the West.