



# ELSC

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**European Legal Support Center**



# European Legal Support Center (ELSC)

The ELSC is the first and only independent organisation of movement lawyers defending and empowering the Palestine Solidarity Movement in Europe through legal means. Established in 2019 by the Palestinian civil society network PNGO, the ELSC has provided legal assistance in over 1000 cases in seven different jurisdictions.

The ELSC is a registered charity in the Netherlands with a head-office in Amsterdam. In 2024, we opened new offices in Berlin and London. In July 2024, the ELSC became a registered entity in Britain. Commencing in December 2024, we will have a British Senior Legal Officer onboarded and therefore have conduct of litigation and the ability to instruct counsel in Britain.

## OUR MANDATE AND VISION

The ELSC intervenes to end arbitrary restrictions and criminalisation of advocacy. We develop legal tools and engage in strategic litigation to support civil society advocacy and campaigns.

Our vision is for an empowered Palestinian Solidarity Movement in Europe, where workers, academics, activists, students, artists, organisations and journalists do not face reprisal for their advocacy for Palestinian rights. We envision a future political and legal environment in which profiting from war crimes and genocide in Palestine is untenable for both public and private actors in Europe.



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## Our Strategic Aims

**Defend** and protect the Palestinian Solidarity Movement from restrictions to the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and assembly.

**Expose** the repression in Europe by making repressive entities and governments accountable.

**Challenge** impunity of public and private actors who are complicit in genocide and in the Israeli apartheid system.

## How We Work

In 2024, the ELSC restructured and scaled our organisational capacity to meet the significant increase in requests for legal advice and support across the Palestinian Solidarity Movement. The ELSC is now structured in two intersecting and dynamic ways (via work teams and departments) to ensure greater integration of our work and more efficient work flow processes.

We have four departments and six work teams that operate in a cross-departmental level to coordinate our work in multiple jurisdictions and areas of law - Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, Europe, Crimes & Complicity, De-funding & Derisking.

## Our Departments

### Monitor & Research

Documents and analyses incidents of repression against advocates for Palestinian rights across Europe. In 2024 the team launched a Database of Repression in Germany. The British database is due to be launched in early 2025 and the team provides Know Your Rights training to groups and individuals targeted by repression.

### Legal

Five work teams across Europe provide expert legal support and advice to those falsely accused of antisemitism or terrorism when they speak out for Palestine. We go on the offensive by engaging in strategic litigation against entities responsible for the repression in Europe and those complicit in and profiting from colonialism, apartheid and genocide in Palestine.

### Advocacy & Communications

Ensures that the movement knows that resisting repression and fighting impunity is possible. We run public campaigns and amplify our legal victories on social media, in the mainstream media and at in-person community events.

### Operations & Development

Brings together financial management, human resources, data administration and systems development with the development team.

# Overview of Major Cases & Victories

We received 726 requests for legal advice and support and are currently working on 403 cases across six work teams and have secured important legal victories since October 2023.

## Britain

November 2024

Palestinian student Dana Abu Qamar has won her appeal at the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) against the Home Office's attempt to cancel her student visa in December 2023 for voicing support to Palestinians' right to resist.

October 2024

Palestinian academic Dr. Shahd Abusalama has secured a major settlement against Sheffield Hallam University which had suspended and investigated her.

Sep 2024

UK prosecutors dropped the case against Amira Abdelhamid after her employer referred her to Prevent for social media posts. ELSC provided advocacy and client support.

Aug 2024

We provided legal advice and support to students facing disciplinary actions for involvement in pro-Palestine activities on campuses. All the proceedings were dismissed.

Mar 2024

Reinstated two professors on UKRI EDI Board after false accusations. UK Science Secretary Michelle Donelan paid £15,000 in damages for libel and issued a public apology.

Apr 2024

ELSC provided legal advice and rapid responses to student-led encampments at several British universities including University of Nottingham, LSE and Queen Mary. We played a key role in delaying possession orders and securing legal representation for students facing eviction.

## Germany

Sep 2024

Created a widely advertised, 24/7 hotline offering fast legal advice in multiple languages for people arrested or fined during demonstrations. Created a network of pro-bono lawyers and local organisations to provide Know Your Rights sessions and immediate support.

Aug 2024

Launched legal actions against the German government with PIPD: (1) to stop arms exports to Israel, and (2) to prosecute officials for aiding genocide in Gaza.

Aug 2024

Victory for Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah, overturning a Schengen-wide travel ban imposed by Germany.

Sep 2024

Victory for activist Yasemin Acar in a legal case against the Tagesspiegel who smeared her as "Israel hater" on the front page of the newspaper.

## Defunding & Derisking

Oct 2023

ELSC assisted individuals and Palestinian CSOs to push back against the weaponisation of counterterrorism measures from EU donors after October 7th 2023. We supported PNGO and Al-Shabaka through legal and advocacy efforts to challenge the unjust defunding of their organisations by the Swiss FDFA.

Oct-Dec 2023

We provided support to numerous individuals and organisations dealing with bank account closures, transaction blockages and restriction of funds for humanitarian aid to Palestine by different banks across Europe, including Wise and Kommerzbank.



## Netherlands

Nov 2023

Provided “Know Your Rights” training for activists and organised legal support networks.

Dec 2023

Dutch courts ordered nine universities to disclose ties to pro-Israel organisations after ELSC's legal intervention. We launched the Academic Complicity website, mapping ties between Dutch universities and Israel.

Oct 2024

Secured settlement and compensation in favour of IT specialist from Gaza after Dutch employment tribunal ruled his dismissal from tech company due to his condemnation of Israeli crimes was unlawful.

Feb 2024

In collaboration with lawyers from the PILP Foundation, six students at Amsterdam University College (AUC) who faced sanctions for their involvement in pro-Palestine protests successfully challenged the sanctions, leading AUC to withdraw all penalties.

## ● Crimes & Complicity

2024

30 cases including leading efforts of strategic litigation, legal advice and support to initiatives and coalitions against Israel's violations of the rights of Palestinians, strategic advice to our partners in Europe, and ad-hoc advice to individual activists and activist collectives.

Oct 2024

Case against the Dutch state for violating its erga omnes obligations to prevent the crime of genocide stemming from the Geneva Conventions and the Genocide Convention, giving effect to recent rulings of the ICJ.

June 2024

Filed a criminal complaint alongside Dutch and Palestinian civil society organisations against Booking.com for profiting from Israel's war crimes.

## Europe

Jan 2022

In 2021, BDS-Austria faced a SLAPP lawsuit from Vienna's Municipality for using the city's logo in a "Visit Apartheid" post, which was deemed incitement to hatred. ELSC is supporting BDS, and after the court ruled against them - ordering damages and banning the logo's use - unsuccessful appeals have led to further penalties totaling €11,700. We are now appealing to the Austrian Supreme Court.

Apr 2024

University of Milan suspends its cooperation agreement with Ariel University in the occupied West Bank; after we supported campus organisers in their campaign to cut ties

Sept 2024

ELSC begun preliminary legal research to initiate a case against Meta to hold the company legally accountable for reproducing anti-Palestinian racism in their policies and automated systems and counter dehumanisation and stereotyping of Palestinians in the digital sphere.

## ● Monitoring the Repression of Solidarity

2024

Release of the ELSC Database of Repression - Germany. We have been collecting incidents of repression of Palestine solidarity since 2019 and have been working on making this research public to provide reliable and verifiable data to reveal effective advocacy and legal strategies that can be taken in response to the attacks. The research will be visualised by Forensic Architecture.

2025

Release of the ELSC Database of Repression - Britain to evidence the structural repression and shrinking space of Palestinian rights advocacy in Britain - one that reveals and tracks incidents of repression in numbers, patterns, mechanisms, actors, detrimental effects and effective strategies to resist them.

# Key Statistics

We received 726 requests for legal advice and support and are currently working on 403 cases across six work teams and have secured important legal victories since October 2023.

Region/ workteam	Incidents of Repression tracked	Requests for legal Support and advice	Lawyers in Network	Ongoing Cases	Closed cases
Britain	400	290	70	61	229
Germany	380	250	45	200	50
Netherlands	191	82	15	19	33
Europe	281	84	26	59	29
Defunding & Derisking	20	20	8	4	16
Crimes And Complicity	N/A	00	N/A	30	N/A
Total	1272	726	164	403	357

300+ Lawyers in Our Network

# Scaling Capacity & Impact



