

Law No. 1 of 2000 Concerning Charitable Associations and Civil Society Organisations

**The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation,
The President of the Palestinian National Authority,**

Having reviewed the Ottoman Associations Law of 29 Ragab 1327 AH in force in the Governorates of the Gaza Strip,
Having reviewed the Law No. 33 of 1966 AD Concerning Charitable Associations and Community Organisations in force in the Governorates of the West Bank,
Having reviewed the draft law submitted by the Council of Ministers, and
Following the approval of the Legislative Council during its session of 25 May, 1999,

I hereby promulgate the following law:

Chapter I.

Article 1

Palestinian citizens shall have the right to exercise social, cultural, professional, and scientific activities in freedom, including the right to establish and manage associations and community organisations pursuant to the provisions of this law.

Article 2: Definitions

In applying the provisions of this law, the following terms and expressions shall have the meanings specified below, unless the context determines otherwise:

Ministry:	The Ministry of the Interior.
Competent Ministry:	The ministry under the competence of which the activities of an association fall.
Minister:	The Minister of the Interior.
Department:	The competent department established in the ministry.
Association or Organisation:	Any charitable association or civil society organisation with independent juridical personality, established upon the agreement of no fewer than seven (7) persons to achieve legitimate objectives of public concern, without aiming at financial profit-making or other personal benefits for the members.
Foreign Association or Organisation:	Any foreign charitable association or civil society organisation, the main headquarters or centre of activities of which is located outside of the Palestinian Territories or the majority of whose employees are not of Palestinian nationality.
General Assembly:	The general decision-making body, consisting of the members of an association and being the highest authority in an association or organisation.
Board of Directors:	The Board of Directors of the association or organisation.
Merger:	Unification of two (2) or more associations or organisations into a single association or organisation with a new juridical personality.

Union:	Unification of two (2) or more associations or organisations whereby a single representative body is established, but each association or organisation maintains its independent juridical personality.
Community Activity:	Any social, economic, cultural, community, developmental or other activity or service, performed voluntarily or optionally and aiming to enhance the social, health, professional, material, spiritual, artistic, sports, cultural or educational level of the citizens in the society.

Chapter II.

Article 3: Registration of Associations or Organisations

The Ministry shall establish a 'Department for the Registration of Associations and Organisations,' in coordination with the competent ministry. For the purpose of the enforcement of this law, the Department shall keep the following registries:

1. A registry recording all applications for registration, using consecutive numbers in accordance with the dates of the application.
2. A general registry of all associations and organisations that are registered and in which the names, centres of activity, objectives, and all other facts that the Department deems necessary for the information of the competent parties shall be recorded.
3. A registry in which the names of the associations and organisations whose applications for registration were rejected shall be included, stating their objectives and the reasons for the rejection, as well as any other additional information that the Department deems necessary for the record.

Article 4: Registration Procedure

1. The founders of an association or organisation shall submit a written application conforming to all conditions of the competent department, signed by no fewer than three (3) of the founding members, who shall be authorised to register and sign on behalf of the association or organisation, along with three (3) copies of the bylaws signed by the members of the founding committee.
2. The Minister shall issue his decision regarding the application within a period not to exceed two (2) months from the date of the submission of the application.
3. If the two (2) months period following the submission of the application expires without a decision being issued, the association or organisation shall be deemed registered by law.
4. If a decision is issued by the Minister denying the application for registration, the decision must be substantiated with the reasons therefor, and the applicants shall have the right to challenge the decision before the competent courts within a period not to exceed thirty (30) days from the date on which they are notified of the decision denying their application.

Article 5

Taking into consideration the provisions of the law, the bylaws of each association or organisation shall include the following:

1. The name of the association or organisation, its address, its purpose, and the location of its main headquarters.
2. The financial resources of the association or organization and the manner in which they are to be used or dispensed.

3. The conditions for membership, the kinds of membership, the reasons for termination of membership, and the subscription fees for members.
4. The organisational structure of the association or organisation, and the rules and regulations governing the amendment of its bylaws, its merger or union with other associations or organisations.
5. The procedures for convening the General Assembly.
6. The methods of financial control.
7. The rules and regulations governing the dissolution of the association or organisation, and the methods of dispensing with its finances and holdings upon dissolution.

Article 6

The competent ministry shall be responsible for following up with the activities of every association or organisation pursuant to the provisions of the law; the ministry shall have the right to follow up on the activities of every association or organisation by virtue of a substantiated written order issued by the competent minister in every case to assure that the funds have been and are being expended for the purposes to which they were assigned pursuant to the provisions of this law and the bylaws of the association or organisation. The association or organisation must assist the ministry in implementing such order to ensure the compliance of the activities thereof with the provisions of this law and the bylaws.

Article 7

Associations and organisations shall be independent juridical bodies, enjoying an independent financial status upon the completion of the registration procedures pursuant to the provisions of this law.

Article 8

The decision of the registration of an association or organisation shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Chapter III. Rights and Obligations of Associations and Organisations

Article 9

Pursuant to the provisions of this law:

1. Every association or organisation may hold movable and immovable funds to achieve its objectives.
2. Every foreign association or organisation may hold immovable funds, provided that it obtains permission to do so from the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of the competent minister.
3. No foreign association or organisation may dispose of its immovable properties without the approval of the Council of Ministers.

Article 10

The relations of associations and organisations with the competent ministries shall be established on the basis of coordination, cooperation, and conformity with the public interest.

Article 11: Records of Associations and Organisations

An association or organisation shall keep at its main headquarters its official financial and administrative records, which shall include all of the following financial transactions, administrative decisions, and data:

1. Incoming and outgoing correspondence in special files and organised records.

2. Bylaws of the association or organisation, names of the members of the Board of Directors in each electoral term, and the date of election of each such member.
3. Names of all members of the association, organisation, or institution, along with the identification, age, and date of subscription to membership of each such member.
4. Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors in chronological order.
5. Minutes of the meetings of the General Assembly.
6. Records of revenues and expenditures detailed pursuant to financial statement regulations.

Article 12

Every association or organisation shall deposit with the competent department a statement regarding every amendment or change affecting its headquarters, bylaws, objectives, or purposes, and full or partial change in its Board of Directors, within a period not to exceed one (1) month from the date on which the amendment or change takes place.

Article 13

The association or organisation shall submit, at a date no later than four (4) months from the end of the fiscal year, two reports approved by the General Assembly as follows:

1. An administrative report containing a full description of the activities of the association or organisation during the elapsed year.
2. A financial report signed by a licensed auditor, containing a detailed revenue and expenditure account of the finances of the association or organisation.

Article 14

Associations and organisations shall be exempted from taxes and customs duties on the transferable land and immovable funds necessary for the implementation of their objectives, provided that they are not disposed of within a period of less than five (5) years from the year in which a tax or customs would have otherwise been due, unless the due taxes and customs duties are paid.

Article 15

1. Associations and organisations shall have the right to organise activities and to establish income generating projects, provided that the revenues are used to cover activities for the public interest.
2. They shall have the right to set up branches inside Palestine.

Chapter IV. The Board of Directors

Article 16

1. Every association or organisation shall have a Board of Directors consisting of at least seven (7) members and not exceeding thirteen (13) members; the bylaws of the association or organisation shall determine the procedures for setting up this Board, for selecting its members, and for terminating their membership.
2. The Board of Directors may not include more than two (2) members bound by close family kinship to the first or second degree.

Article 17

1. The Board of Directors of each association or organisation shall be responsible for its operations and activities.

2. The chairman of the association or organisation or whoever acts on his behalf pursuant to the bylaws in the event of his absence shall represent the association or organisation before other parties and sign on its behalf all correspondence, contracts and agreements concluded between it and other parties.

Article 18: Competence of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the following:

1. Managing the association or organisation and preparing the necessary rules, regulations, and instructions.
2. Appointing the staff necessary for the association or organisation and determining their tasks or the termination of their services pursuant to the provisions of the law.
3. Establishing committees that it deems necessary for the improvement of operations and determining the competence of each committee.
4. Drawing up the final statement of accounts for the past fiscal year and the draft budget for the coming year.
5. Submitting the annual administrative and financial reports and all future plans and projects before the Assembly.
6. Inviting the General Assembly to convene an ordinary or extraordinary meeting session and implementing its resolutions pursuant to the provisions of the law.
7. Following up all observations submitted by the competent department, ministry, or other official bodies regarding the activities of the association or organisation, and responding to them.

Article 19

The jurisdiction of the Chairman, the Deputy-Chairman, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Board of Directors of each association or organisation shall be determined pursuant to its bylaws and internal regulations in a manner that does not contradict the provisions of this law.

Article 20

No person may hold a position as a member of the Board of Directors and another post in the association or organisation in return for wages.

Article 21

1. The Board of Directors shall convene an ordinary meeting at least once every three (3) months upon the invitation of the Chairman or the Deputy-Chairman.
2. The Board of Directors shall convene an extraordinary meeting, as occasion may require, upon the invitation of the Chairman or the Deputy-Chairman or upon the request of one-third (1/3) of its members.
3. The meetings of the Board of Directors shall be considered legally valid if attended by two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board.
4. In all circumstances, the decisions of the Board of Directors shall be made by absolute majority.

Article 22

1. When it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Board of Directors as a result of the resignation or death of a member, the remaining members of the Board of Directors, in their capacity as a transitional temporary committee, shall assume the responsibilities of the Board of Directors for a period not to exceed one (1) month and shall invite the General Assembly to convene within this same period to elect a new Board of Directors.

2. In the event of a collective resignation or in the event that the transitional committee fails to carry out its tasks as set out in the first paragraph of this Article, the Minister shall appoint a transitional committee from the members of the General Assembly to carry out the tasks of the Board of Directors for a period not to exceed one (1) month, which transitional committee shall invite the General Assembly to convene within the same period to elect a new Board of Directors.

Chapter V. The General Assembly

Article 23: Formation and Competence

Without prejudice to the provisions set forth by this law:

1. The bylaws of the association or organisation shall determine the formation of the General Assembly of the association or organisation, so that it shall comprise the members who have fulfilled their commitments pursuant to the bylaws. The General Assembly shall convene its ordinary meeting at least once every year to review the report submitted by the Board of Directors regarding the activities of the association or organisation and the report of the financial auditor regarding its financial position, to approve the report, to appoint the financial auditor, and to discuss other matters included on the agenda by the Board of Directors.
2. The General Assembly shall be responsible for promulgating the general policies and guidelines of the association or organisation and for the election of the members of the Board of Directors pursuant to its bylaws.
3. Decisions regarding amendments to the bylaws shall be made by the absolute majority of the members of the General Assembly. Decisions to dissolve the association or organisation or to introduce amendments regarding the purposes of the association or organisation shall require the approval by a two-thirds (2/3) majority. Decisions to dismiss any of the members of the Board, or to unite or merge with another association shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority, unless set forth otherwise in the bylaws of the association or organisation.

Article 24: Extraordinary Meetings

One-third (1/3) of the members of the General Assembly of an association or organisation may call for an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly.

Article 25

The quorum for the meetings of the General Assembly of the association or organisation shall be obtained with the attendance of the absolute majority of the members. If an absolute majority is not present, the meeting shall be postponed to another session to convene within a period not to exceed fifteen (15) days from the date of the first meeting, in which case the meeting shall convene with those present, provided that their number is not fewer than one-third (1/3) of the members of the association or organisation.

Chapter VI. Union and Merger

Article 26

1. Two or more associations or organisations may merge or unite, without prejudice to the rights of other parties toward each of these associations or organisations before the merger.

2. The representatives of the associations or organisations joining a merger shall turn over all funds and special records of their association or organisation to the new association or organisation created by the merger.
3. The new association or organisation shall not be liable for the commitments of the associations or organisations that merged into it, except within the limits of the funds handed over by those associations or organisations and the rights accruing to it as of the date of merger.

Article 27

Three (3) or more associations or organisations may form a single union, provided that the participation of every party is voluntary.

Article 28

Any association or organisation may join or be affiliated with any association or organisation outside of the Palestinian territories, provided that the competent party shall be informed.

Article 29

All procedures and provisions set forth in this law regarding the manner and procedures of registration, the basic regulations and related statements, and their articles of association, shall also apply to every union concluded among a group of associations or organisations or any unified associations or organisations established pursuant to its provisions.

Chapter VII. Financial Affairs of Associations or Organisations

Article 30

Every association or organisation shall have an annual budget controlled by a licensed accountant, unless its expenditure is less than the sum of one-thousand (1,000) Jordanian Dinars or the equivalent in legal tender. In every case, the auditor shall submit a report on the financial position of the association or organisation for the past fiscal year to the General Assembly in its annual meeting for its approval and ratification.

Article 31

An association or organisation shall deposit its cash funds under its own name in an accredited bank and inform the competent ministry of the depository party. An association or organisation may not keep in its holdings cash funds that exceed the expenditure of the association for one (1) month.

Article 32

In a manner not contradicting the provisions of this law, associations or organisations may receive unconditional assistance to serve their work.

Article 33

Associations or organisations may collect contributions from the public or by organising parties, charity bazaars, sports competitions, or other means of collecting funds for the social purposes for which it was established, informing the competent ministry thereof.

Chapter VIII. Foreign Charitable Associations and Organisations

Article 34

Pursuant to the provisions of the law:

1. Every foreign association or organisation may submit an application to the Ministry to open one or more branches of the association or organisation in the Palestinian Territories to perform social services, provided that such services are compatible with the interests and aspirations of the Palestinian people. Such applications shall specify the name of the foreign association or organisation, the location of its main headquarters, its address, the names of its founders and the members of its Board of Directors, its main purposes, the names of the persons in charge of the proposed branch and their nationalities, and the manner in which the funds of the branch will be disposed of upon dissolution of the branch, the liquidation of its operations, or its withdrawal, provided that the process may not exceed a period of two (2) months from the date the application was accepted.
2. The Ministry shall consult with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation regarding the application for registering a foreign association or organisation.

Article 35

The persons responsible for any of the branches of the foreign association or organisation shall inform the Ministry of Interior of all changes in the data related to the branch they manage within a period not to exceed one (1) month from the date of each such change.

Article 36

Every branch of the foreign association or organisation shall submit to the Ministry an annual report on its activities and the funds that were used to implement these activities.

Article 37: Dissolution of an Association or Organisation

An association or organisation shall be dissolved in the following cases:

1. If the General Assembly decides to dissolve the association. The Ministry must be promptly informed of such a decision.
2. If it does not commence its actual operations within the first year of the date of the registration or of obtaining its license, unless the cessation of activities resulted from circumstances beyond its control. In this case, the Ministry shall abolish the registration of the association pursuant to a written notification to the association or organisation.
3. It is proven that the association or organisation substantially violated its bylaws and did not adjust its status within a period not to exceed three (3) months from the issuance of a written warning by the competent minister or department.

Article 38

1. If the Minister issues a decision to repeal the registration of an association or organisation, the decision shall state the reasons, and the association or organisation shall have the right to challenge the decision before the competent court.
2. If a decision to dissolve an association or organisation is challenged before a competent court, the association or organisation may resume its work until a temporary or final decision is issued to halt its activities or to dissolve it.

Article 39

1. Without prejudice to the provisions set forth by this law, if an association or organisation is dissolved, a waged liquidator shall be appointed to prepare an inventory of the funds to be disposed of pursuant to its bylaws; if the bylaws make no reference to the manner in which the funds will be disposed of, the Ministry shall transfer the funds of the dissolved

association or organisation to associations and organisations with similar purposes, taking into account the pensions, allowances, and rights of the employees of the dissolved association and that these will be exempt from the transfer.

2. If an association or organisation is dissolved, the funds and assets thereof shall be transferred to a Palestinian association similar in its objectives to be named by the dissolved association or organisation.
3. In all events, the funds and assets of the dissolved association or organisation shall be spent in accordance with its purposes within the borders of the Palestinian Territories.

Chapter IX. General and Transitional Provisions

Article 40

In honouring the provisions of this law, it shall be the obligation of associations and organisations to adhere to the instructions of the professional registration determined by the competent ministry, as related to the provision of specialised professional services.

Article 41

It shall be prohibited to confiscate funds of an association or organisation, or close it, or conduct a search in its main and branch offices without an order issued by the competent judicial entity.

Article 42

All associations and organisations registered before the enforcement of the law shall be considered officially registered, provided that they accommodate their business pursuant to the provisions of this law within a period not to exceed nine (9) months from the date of its enforcement; otherwise such associations or organisations shall be deemed in violation of the provisions of the general law.

Article 43

The Ottoman Associations Law of 29 Ragab 1327 AH in force in Palestine and the Law No. 33 of 1966 AD Concerning Charitable Associations and Community Organisations in force in Palestine, as well as all other provisions contradicting the provisions of this law are hereby repealed.

Article 44

The Minister shall issue the bylaws and decisions necessary for the enforcement of the provisions of this law.

Article 45

All competent authorities, each one within its sphere of jurisdiction, shall implement the provisions of this law, which shall enter into force thirty (30) days after the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Gaza on 16 January, 2000 AD, corresponding to 9 Shawwal 1420 AH.

Yasser Arafat

**Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation
President of the Palestinian National Authority**

Note: This means that a person alters, or helps to alter, the possession of land by sale or otherwise to or for the benefit of the enemy.

