

**Israel/Palestine
Working Group
in the UN**



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Gaps in Protection For Local Actors and Civil Society Organizations in Palestine

Background:

According to UNRWA, the UN Human Rights Office, and UNICEF, Gaza is the most dangerous place in the world for journalists, aid workers, and children. At the same time, Palestinians in the West Bank are experiencing increased human rights violations while global attention is focused on other crises with global leaders providing little if any effective responses to meet Palestinian communities' protection needs. In order to operate in these environments, civil society organizations and affected communities have developed their own protection networks and procedures, using every tool at their disposal to prevent harm to themselves and the communities they serve.

You are invited to an expert panel discussion on **19 May 2026 from 8:30 AM to 09:45 AM EDT**. You will hear several first-hand testimonies from individuals who practice or support the nonviolent protection of civilians operating in the Palestinian territories under these conditions.

Each speaker will describe the conditions of operation in their protection work and the constraints they face, share their experience developing the capacity and procedures to mitigate harm, and provide a clear account of the persecution and danger faced by local actors and civil society organizations.

The international protection system in Palestine is at a critical juncture as humanitarian organizations are being deregistered and international practitioners in the West Bank are being deported at increasing rates. This reduction of the international presence leaves those who remain in more vulnerable positions and makes cross-sector work significantly more challenging. With these current protection mechanisms under attack, stronger diplomacy, advocacy, and tangible support from member states, as well as better communication between international and local actors are critical to the safety and efficacy of civil society organizations in Palestine.

Doors will open at 8:15 AM. You will hear several first-hand testimonies from individuals who respond to gaps in protection of civilians in different ways as community leaders, practitioners, or civil society workers. The event is co-hosted by the NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Pax Christi, and Unarmed Civilian Protection in Palestine (UCPIP).

This is a hybrid event. The in-person address is: 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY, 10017 (Floor N.TBA). You may register to join via zoom by [clicking here](#) or in-person by [clicking here](#). There will be

coffee and pastries provided by a local Palestinian bakery.

Meeting Goals:

- Strengthen relationships between international policy makers and local actors by identifying key concerns, providing insights into protection methods and procedures, and fostering collaboration.
- Share best practices and identify which methods are most effective in saving lives and protecting communities.
- Promote a paradigm shift away from a colonial or interventionist mindset and toward local capacity enhancement, which emphasizes the primacy of local actors and centers voices from the ground in protection concerns and efforts.

Distinguished Speakers:



**AMIRA
MUSALLAM**
UCPIP, TANENBAUM

Amira Musallam is a Palestinian Christian peace activist and the Head of Mission and co-founder of Unarmed Civilian Protection in Palestine (UCPIP), an initiative coordinating protective presence, documentation, and international advocacy in high-risk Palestinian communities in the West Bank. Amira has worked with B'Tselem, Holy Land Trust, and international civil society networks advocating for civilian protection and accountability. She was a member of the 2024 assessment team that produced a feasibility report on scaling unarmed civilian protection in Palestine. Amira is also a recipient of the 2025 Tanenbaum Peacemakers in Action Award.



**COMMUNITY
LEADER**
FROM RAS 'EIN AL
'AUJA

Ras 'Ein al 'Auja is a Bedouin community that has lived in the southern Jordan Valley of the West Bank for about fifty years. In recent years, they faced increasing rates of settler violence, which ultimately led to the forced displacement of the entire community this past February. The speaker, who has chosen to remain anonymous for security reasons, will speak about both the challenges his community faced and the ways in which organizing and nonviolent protection work bolstered the community's resilience in the face of unceasing violence.



**ODED
PAPORISCH**
YESH DIN, LOOKING THE
OCCUPATION IN THE EYE

Oded Paporisch is an Israeli citizen who has been doing protective presence in the West Bank for the last five years. As part of his work, he escorts Palestinian residents who are victims of crimes to Israeli police stations with the human rights organization Yesh Din. On February 27, Oded was injured and hospitalized when settlers attacked him and other Israeli UCP practitioners during a solidarity mission.



**SETH
MALONE**
MENNONITE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE

Seth Malone is a humanitarian worker and peace advocate with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), serving as its Representative for Jordan, Palestine, and Israel alongside Sarah Funkhouser. Based in Jerusalem, he works with Palestinian and Israeli partner organizations on humanitarian relief, peacebuilding, and advocacy related to the ongoing conflict in the region. His work has included coordinating emergency aid efforts in Gaza, supporting education and community programs in the West Bank, and engaging international policymakers and faith communities around issues of justice, nonviolence, and human rights.

For any follow up questions, don't hesitate to reach out to Mx. Ari Chais at:

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