



**Mapping the leaders of the demonstrations supporting  
 Hamas in eastern European Union countries since the  
 outbreak of Operation Iron Swords  
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## Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ Since Hamas' October 7, 2023, terrorist attack and massacre, and the beginning of the IDF's Operation Iron Swords, pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel demonstrations have been held in many European Union (EU) countries, including countries in the east. The demonstrators call for a ceasefire and the end of the local government's support for Israel, and chant anti-Israeli slogans, the most popular of which is "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."
- ▶ The demonstrations the EU's east are organized by the local Palestinian communities in cooperation with radical left organizations, anti-government organizations and anarchist movements. During October 2023, joint umbrella organizations were established to coordinate protest activities, such as the collaboration between the Red-Green Alliance (the strong partnership of radical left organizations and Palestinian organizations, including groups affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood movement). **The organizations and activists expressed support for the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre and the subsequent "armed Palestinian resistance," while accusing Israel of committing "genocide" in the Gaza Strip.**
- ▶ In the name of freedom of expression, local authorities permit pro-Palestinian demonstrations as long as they receive a license and are conducted accordingly, and in the majority of cases there have been no events which required police intervention. Hungary is the only country in the eastern EU which issued a complete ban on pro-Palestinian demonstrations, citing fear of violence (Hungary Today, November 8, 2023).
- ▶ The EU first included the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, in its initial list of designated terrorist organizations and operatives drawn up in December 2001, following the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. Two years later, the Hamas movement as a whole was put on the list. A ruling by the EU's General Court in 2014 declared the designation

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<sup>1</sup> Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

invalid, but the EU's Court of Justice, its highest legal authority, returned Hamas to the list in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

► Including Hamas in the EU's list of terrorist organizations makes it possible to freeze Hamas' bank accounts and other financial assets in the EU member states. In addition, legal and law enforcement measures can be taken against individuals on the list, their assets can be frozen and their entry into the EU countries can be prohibited. On December 8, 2023, the EU added the names of Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades commanders Muhammad Deif and Marwan Issa to its list of terrorist operatives (European Council website, December 8, 2023). On January 19, 2024, the EU announced a new ruling which also allows sanctions to be imposed on individuals and entities that provide financial assistance to Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) or allow terrorist groups to carry out attacks and attack Israel's security. As a result, six individuals were added to the list (European Council website, January 19, 2024).

► The leaders of the 27 EU countries issued a joint statement condemning the Hamas attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, and emphasized Israel's right to self-defense (European Council website, October 15, 2023). Governments in the member states also published their own statements against Hamas and in favor of Israel's right to act militarily against terrorism, while safeguarding civilian lives and international humanitarian law (Balkan Insight, October 13, 2023).

► This study will examine the entities leading the pro-Palestinian and pro-Hamas demonstrations in Poland, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece and Croatia.

## The Demonstrations in Various Countries

### Poland

► One of the most active bodies in the protests since October 7, 2023, has been a socialist organization called The Reds (Czerwoni), which split from the Socialist Party in 2022. A statement published by the organization after the Hamas attack accused the West of ignoring the situation in the Gaza Strip and declared support for a violent Palestinian "struggle" "until the end." The statement claimed that the Palestinians operated "a thriving

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<sup>2</sup> For further information, see the November 2023 ITIC report, "[International activity against Hamas since the outbreak of Operation Iron Swords.](#)"

and diverse guerrilla movement [sic] that is made up of victims of the occupation, ready to sacrifice for their nation" (Red Front website, October 14, 2023).

►Reds activists organized demonstrations in Warsaw whose theme was "Solidarity with Palestine." The first demonstration took place on October 21, 2023, with demonstrators holding signs reading, "From the river to the sea" and "What is happening in Palestine is genocide and mass destruction." One of the participants, a student from Norway named Marie Andersen, held an anti-Semitic sign showing a Star of David inside a trash can with the inscription "Keep the world clean" (Do Rzeczy, October 22, 2023).



**Anti-Semitic sign at a demonstration in Warsaw  
(Tomasz Grzywaczewski's X account, October 21, 2023)**

►**The Association of the Palestinian Community in Poland** works to promote the integration of Palestinians living in the country into Polish society and to promote awareness of the Palestinians, holding lectures, artistic events and maintaining connections with state institutions and NGOs (Association website, undated).

►Since October 7, 2023, the Association has been involved in organizing pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Poland, and at the same time publishes anti-Israeli posts on social networks. For example, on October 12, 2023, the Association condemned "the absurd position of the media and news channels in Europe that spread lies and distort the truth about Palestinians who beheaded children just to serve Israel and justify revenge on the Palestinian nation [sic]" (Association Facebook page, October 12, 2023).

►The **Krakow for Palestine** movement leads anti-Israel demonstrations in Krakow Israel is accused of "ethnic cleansing and genocide," and include the chant "From the river to the sea" (krakow naszemiasto, November 12, 2023). Among the organizers of the demonstrations is Omar Fares, a Palestinian living in Poland, head of the Social and Cultural Association of Palestinians in Poland, who promotes Hamas propaganda on his Facebook

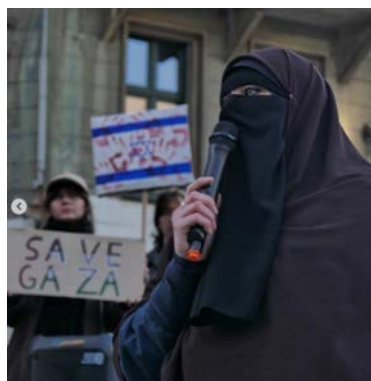
page, such as statements by Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing and various anti-Semitic posts (Omar Fares' Facebook page, various dates in 2023 and January 2024).



**Omar Fares (Solidarity with Palestine X account, January 14, 2024)**

►A group called **Without Borders**, which works for immigrants' rights, and the radical group **Anarchist Federation of Silesia** lead pro-Palestinian demonstrations in the city of Katowice, in cooperation with the Association of the Palestinian Community in Poland. The demonstrators carry signs reading, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" and "Israel is the real terrorists" and accusing Israel of "genocide" (Without Borders Facebook page, November 19, 2023).

►A radical social group called **Rozbrat** organized "solidarity demonstrations" with Palestinians in the city of Poznan. According to the statement it in preparation for the demonstration on October 18, 2023, Israel's actions "are war crimes and must be seen as such. We stand in solidarity with all Palestinian women and men who are fighting for freedom, life and independence" (Rozbrat Instagram account, October 15, 2023).



**The Rozbrat demonstration in Poznan (Rozbrat Instagram account, October 21, 2023)**

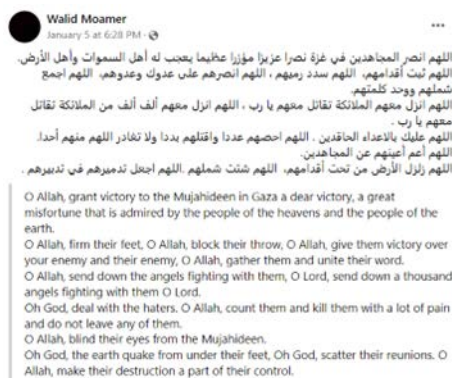
►The so-called **Awakening Foundation** (Fundacja Przebudzenie) is an NGO which promotes "human rights, nature protection, ecological consumption, healthy life and mental

development." On October 7, 2023, it condemned Hamas for war crimes during its attack and massacre, but it promotes anti-Israeli demonstrations and calls for a complete boycott of Israel (Awakening Foundation Facebook page, October 22, 2023).

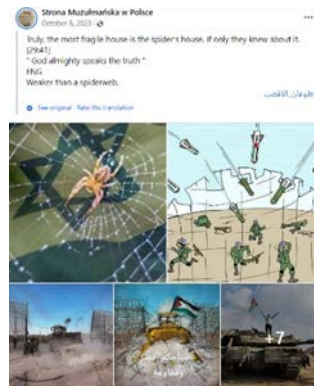
► There are also Facebook pages that promote the narrative of the Palestinian "resistance" against Israel. One of the most prominent Palestinian activists in Poland is Walid Moamer, who was originally from Rafah. His Facebook page is rife with anti-Israel and anti-Semitic posts. For example, on December 31, 2023, he posted a picture of a Palestinian flag erasing the Star of David and wrote, "We have only one dream for 2024, a world without Israel." A day earlier, he wrote, "If I have to choose between my life and the life of my family (my children and my wife) and a life of 'resistance,' I will definitely choose the life of resistance, even if they cut us to pieces" (Walid Moamer's Facebook page, December 30, 2023).

► On October 7, 2023, Facebook page of **The Muslim Side in Poland** (Strona Muzułmańska w Polsce) posted video clips documenting the Hamas attack and massacre, including photographs of terrorists on motorcycles, terrorists with paragliders crossing the border fence and a tank on fire, and after that, cartoons and anti-Israeli memes (The Muslim Side in Poland Facebook page, October 8, 2023).

► **Palestine in Polish** (Palestyna po polsku) is a Facebook page which defines itself as "a pro-Palestinian group against the Israeli occupation and against Zionism, not against Jews and we do not accept anti-Semitism." The page allows posts on Palestinian issues in Polish only and includes accusations against Israel of terrorism and "genocide" (Palestine in Polish Facebook page).



**A post by Walid Moamer reading, "O Allah, grant victory to the Mujahideen in Gaza" (Walid Moamer's Facebook page, January 5, 2024)**



**Pictures from the October 7, 2023 attack and anti-Israel cartoons on The Muslim Side in Poland's Facebook page (October 8, 2023)**

## The Czech Republic

- ▶The main organizer of the pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Prague is **An Initiative Not in Our Name! The Initiative for a Just Peace in the Middle East** (Brno Daily, October 2023). The initiative belongs to the Czech branch of the **International Solidarity Movement (ISM)**, a network of organizations established in 2001 consisting of anti-Israel activists who demonstrate their solidarity with the Palestinian "struggle" using [so-called] "non-violent" tactics, such as involvement in flotillas to Gaza, sending volunteers to points of friction between Israelis and Palestinians and promoting anti-Israel demonstrations and boycott activity against Israel.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶The Czech branch also belongs to the **ECCP, the European Coordination OF Committees and Associations for Palestine**, an umbrella organization of more than 40 NGOs across Europe as part of the boycott movement against Israel. The organization, which is headquartered in Brussels, maintains active ties with members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a Palestinian terrorist organization.
- ▶The statement published by An Initiative Not in Our Name! on October 7, 2023, condemned the terrorist attack carried out by Hamas against Israeli civilians, but it placed direct responsibility on Israel. According to the statement, "the causes of the ongoing events must be sought in the Israeli occupation army and in Israel itself, which is directly responsible for the conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the besieged Gaza Strip," adding that "we do not speak on behalf of any Palestinian faction, they will be responsible for their

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see the December 2010 ITIC report, "[The International Solidarity Movement \(ISM\) is a network founded by extreme American leftists and part of the campaign to delegitimize Israel.](#)"

'resistance' against Israel 'apartheid policy' and the 'colonization' of the settlers" (ISM Czech website, October 7, 2023). In the ad announcing a demonstration organized by the three bodies, the participants were told not to display "aggressive slogans" or symbols associated with Hamas or Israel to avoid a possible response from the authorities.

►Another body involved in organizing the demonstrations is the **Friends of Palestine**. The direct connection between the organizations is provided by **Zdeněk Jehlička**, who serves as the spokesman for the Friends of Palestine Association and also belongs to An Initiative Not in Our Name! and to the Czech branch of the ISM (PrahaIN, October 15, 2023). In an interview after the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, he avoided calling Hamas a terrorist organization, but did claim that it was a "gang that controls the Gaza prison" and that if the blockade of the Strip were lifted, Hamas "would lose support" (Seznam Zprávy, October 19, 2023).

►In October 2023, after Hamas' terrorist attack and massacre, the Youth of Prague for Palestine movement was established, defining itself as "a collective of international and queer youth for Palestine located in Prague" (the movement's Instagram account, undated). In its founding statement the movement gave as its mission "to awaken a vibrant community in Prague, raise awareness and take tangible steps to dismantle the oppressive, imperialist, colonialist, pink-washed<sup>4</sup>, patriarchal forces of Israel" (the movement's Instagram account, October 26, 2023).



#### A call for the end of Zionism (Youth of Prague Instagram account, December 31, 2023)

►The radical feminist website **Second Shift (Druhá : sénéna)**, which works to promote "feminist perspectives on a society that emphasizes social justice, post-colonialism and LGBT issues," also spreads anti-Israeli and pro-Hamas propaganda. In January 2024, the

<sup>4</sup> Pink-washed, a term used to describe the political exploitation of the gay community to hide human rights violations. In the context of Israel, it is used to accuse Israel of claiming to be friendly to the gay community while attacking Palestinian rights.

website dedicated its monthly magazine on the subject of "freeing Palestine." One of the articles stated that "there is no forensic evidence to support the accusations that Hamas terrorists sexually assaulted Jewish women" and that "for Zionism, the existence of the original inhabitants of Palestine, i.e. the Palestinians, is a problem whose solution can only be achieved through their ethnic cleansing or genocide" (Second Shift website, January 2024).

►At the beginning of December 2023, the municipality of Prague banned a "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" demonstration because it was a call for the destruction of Israel. The Ministry of the Interior also announced that it was considering outlawing the slogan. However, the Municipal Court of Prague ruled that it cannot ban the use of the slogan since [allegedly] it "does not promote genocide and is not anti-Semitic" (ISM Czech Republic website, January 6, 2024).



**A pro-Palestinian demonstration in Prague  
(Friends of Palestine Association Facebook page, November 1, 2023)**

## Cyprus

►In the evening of October 7, 2023, when the Hamas attack on Israel was still in progress, dozens of young Palestinians were recorded in the city of Larnaca celebrating the massacres of Israeli civilians and handing out candy to passersby (Greek City Times, October 11, 2023).

►The first demonstrations after October 7, 2023, in Cyprus were initiated by Palestinian expatriates on the island. **The Union of Palestinian Women in Cyprus**, the local branch of the General Union of Palestinian Women, which belongs to the PLO and is headed by **Intisar al-Wazir (Umm Jihad)**,<sup>5</sup> initiated a demonstration on October 15, 2023, whose objective was

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<sup>5</sup> Intisar al-Wazir is one of the most prominent women in Fatah. She heads the Institution for the Care of the Families of the Martyrs and the Wounded, which is subordinate to the PLO and provides monthly payments and social service assistance for families of Palestinian shaheeds and wounded.



to "reject the Zionist crimes of [alleged] genocide against our people in Gaza, which affect children, women, the elderly and even on our trees; to reveal the conduct of the Zionist occupation; to support the steadfastness and bravery of our people" (Reddit, October 15, 2023).

►The central body responsible for initiating pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Cyprus is **United for Palestine in Cyprus (UFP)**, which was founded by students in October 2023. The organization established branches in the main cities of Cyprus to "demonstrate a presence for Palestine." In addition to expressing solidarity with the Palestinians and calling for a ceasefire in the war, it also promotes the boycott against Israel, opposes the Cypriot government's support for Israel and opposes the British bases on the island which it claims are used as points for the transfer of weapons to Israel (xekinima website, January 8, 2024).

►Extreme leftist organizations, feminist and environmental organizations and anti-war organizations also take part in the pro-Palestinian protest (UFP Instagram account, November 15, 2023). The most prominent body is the **Peace Council of Cyprus (PSE)**, an NGO founded in 1949 that works to promote peace and reconciliation in Cyprus (Peoples Dispatch, October 26, 2019).

►A statement published by the PSE following the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre condemned the "murderous attacks by Hamas," but immediately added that they were "a response to the chaos created by the settlers with the support of the State of Israel in the Palestinian territories occupied in the previous days and the management of pogroms and the desecration of holy places" (PSE Facebook page, October 10, 2023).

►On January 14, 2024, the PSE and UFP led a demonstration near the Akrotiri British Royal Air Force base, from which British warplanes launched strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen. The protesters demanded the closing of the British bases along with an end to the war in Gaza (Ekathimerin Cyprus, January 15, 2024).

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Intisar is the widow of Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), who was Yasser Arafat's deputy and the head of the PLO's military wing, and was killed in an IDF operation in Tunis in April 1988.



**PSE and UFP demonstration near the British base with signs against Israel  
(PSE Facebook page, January 14, 2024)**

## Greece

► On October 29, 2023, **Stop the War – Solidarity with Palestine Alliance** was established to organize the pro-Palestinian protest measures. The Alliance is an umbrella organization of members of the Palestinian community in Greece and far left organizations, labor unions and student associations which had joined the Stop the War Alliance which protested the war in Iraq in 2003. The Alliance leads large demonstrations in Athens and other cities throughout Greece, where anti-Israeli slogans such as "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" and "Victory with Intifada" are heard (Socialist Workers Party Facebook page, January 13, 2024).

► The first official statement issued by the Alliance stated that its members "salute the Palestinian struggle against the terrorist state of Israel and the genocide it commits" and they "resolutely stand with the Palestinian 'resistance' as it continues to bravely confront the Israeli war machine, not only in the Gaza Strip, but in the West Bank and Jerusalem." The statement claimed that "the Palestinian resistance is not 'terrorism' and solidarity with it is not anti-Semitism. It is a struggle for the existence of a heroic people against a racist-terrorist state that wants to uproot it from its base." The statement ended, "We all stand together with the 'resistance' until victory, for a free Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea" (Facebook account of the Socialist Workers Party, October 30, 2023).



**Demonstration held by the Stop the War Alliance – Solidarity with Palestine  
(Alliance Facebook page, January 14, 2024)**

- ▶ One of the leading bodies of this alliance is the extreme left **Socialist Workers' Party (S.E.K.)**. The party's official announcement after the October 7, 2023 attack had no condemnation of the massacre of civilians in Israel, but the accusation that Israel was "trying to occupy the Gaza Strip under the guise of 'fighting terrorism'." It also claimed, "The Palestinian resistance is not 'terrorism.' It is a struggle for the existence of a heroic people against a racist terrorist state that wants to uproot them from their homes" (S.E.K Instagram account, October 7, 2023).
- ▶ Another body leading the protests in Greece is the **PAME (Militant Front of All Workers)**, a radical left-wing umbrella organization of public- and private-sector unions that fights "capital, the EU and the government" and which opposes "imperialism and its wars" (PAME website, May 6 2010).
- ▶ PAME expressed support for the Hamas attack and massacre with a statement of "solidarity with the heroic inhabitants of Palestine and with their right to defend their country against foreign occupation by any means necessary." It also claimed that "people who fight for their lives are not terrorists" and that the terrorists are the murderers of the people, the USA-NATO-EU who support Israel" (PAME website, October 9, 2023).



Advertisement for a demonstration by the Stop the War alliance – Solidarity with Palestine (S.E.K. Instagram account, January 7, 2024)

## Croatia

- ▶The pro-Palestinian protest in Croatia is organized by the **Initiative for a Free Palestine**, a group which was formed during Operation Guardian of the Walls in May 2021. The initiative's official statement following the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre stated that "we are witnessing crimes on the scale of genocide in a situation where children are [allegedly] writing their last wills and testaments [referring to Palestinians, not Israelis]." The initiative called for a ceasefire and the lifting of the siege on Gaza along with the release of all prisoners in Israeli prisons and the release of those kidnapped by Hamas (Initiative Instagram account, October 28, 2023).
- ▶The initiative's protest demonstrations, attended by a few thousand demonstrators, call for a ceasefire and lifting the "blockade of Gaza," and accuse Israel of genocide. They also demand that the Croatian government stop supporting Israel and join the lawsuit at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. In addition, they also call for the release of the hostages (Index.hr, January 13, 2024).