

Israel bans European NGOs by claiming they represent Hamas

By [The Palestinian Information Center](#)

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Hebrew media sources said that Israel's war minister Moshe Ya'alon has outlawed the Council for European Palestinian Relations (CEPR), a Belgian non-profit organization, and the European Campaign to Remove the Siege on the Gaza Strip.

Haaretz newspaper claimed in its Tuesday edition that these two organizations serve as Hamas' representatives in Europe.

It said that members of the CEPR, including four European MPs, are now in danger of arrest if they land at Ben Gurion airport.

The paper added that the CEPR organization acts as a lobby for Gaza's Palestinian government in the European Union.

The CEPR website said it was established to promote dialogue and understanding between European, Palestinian and Arab parliamentarians and policy-makers.

"We seek a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on justice and the restoration of Palestinian rights in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law", the Brussels-based NGO said.

In the past three years the CEPR has organized six delegations of European MPs, who visited the occupied territories, the West Bank and Gaza. In 2010, director of the organization Dr. Arafat Shoukri met with the then-chairman of the EU Parliament.

Haaretz reported that Ya'alon had already declared the CEPR was "an outlawed organization" two weeks ago, which means Israel can confiscate money related to the group and try its members or those who provide them with services.

The occupation's Shin Bet security services said that the CEPR was recently declared an illegal organization "in light of the fact that it is Hamas's leading organization in Europe, which carries out its activity under cover of being a pro-Palestinian organization."

It added that "the organization is headed by senior Hamas activists, including Arafat Shoukri and Rami Abdo, while the European Campaign to Remove the Siege on the Gaza Strip is a media name only, without any real organization behind it."

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