

Pressured by Pro-Israel Lobby, France's Minister of Justice Refuses to Present The French Republic's "Official" Human Rights Award to Al-Haq, B'Tselem

By [Middle East Monitor](#)

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The French justice minister has refused to present a prestigious human rights award to Palestinian and Israeli human rights organisations Al-Haq and B'Tselem after being pressured by a French-Jewish organisation.

Nicole Belloubet was supposed to present Al-Haq and B'Tselem with the Human Rights Awards of the French Republic this evening, after the organisations were among five laureates conferred the prestigious prize. The ceremony will take place at the Ministry of Justice in the French capital Paris, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Yet Belloubet has refused to present the award after receiving a letter from **Francis Kalifat**, the president of CRIF (Representative Council of the Jewish Institutions of France). CRIF acts as an umbrella of French-Jewish organisations and has regularly [lobbied](#) France to support Israeli positions.

In this letter Kalifat called on Belloubet not to present the award, claiming the "two organisations [are] known to call for the boycott of Israel [...] which is banned by [the French] criminal code," the [Jerusalem Post](#) reported. Kalifat added that for the French Justice Ministry to present Al-Haq and B'Tselem with the award, "even in the absence of the minister [Belloubet], is insulting justice".

"I ask you [...] not to support the action of those who act in contradiction with our laws," he implored.

Pressure to withhold the award has also come from Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister, **Tzipi Hotovely**, who likewise wrote a letter to Belloubet asking him to reconsider. According to [Ynet](#), Hotovely called France's decision "a badge of honour to anti-Israeli organisations", adding:

"B'Tselem is an organisation that bases its activity on unreliable sources in order to harm Israel, while Al-Haq promotes a boycott against Israel and some of the organisation's members are linked to terror groups, such as the Palestinian Liberation Front."

Since the decision was [announced](#) last week, Israeli ministers have reacted with anger and

slammed both France and the NGOs. Israel's Deputy Minister for Diplomacy, **Michael Oren**, said:

“France gives its highest award to B'Tselem and al-Haq organisations that accuse Israel of [apartheid](#), delegitimise us internationally, defend terror, and support [BDS](#). The same France cannot claim that it fights antisemitism.”

Meanwhile Israel's Culture Minister, **Miri Regev**, labelled B'Tselem “a Trojan horse,” saying the organisation should be ashamed for sharing an award with Al-Haq.

This is not the first time Israel has tried to discredit B'Tselem on the international stage. In October B'Tselem's executive director Hagai El-Ad [gave](#) a speech at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in which he slammed Israel's occupation and its violations against Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Several days before El-Ad's appearance, Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** [branded](#) the organisation a “disgrace”, while Israel's Ambassador to the UN, **Danny Danon**, said El-Ad's intention to speak at the UNSC was not only a “disgrace for the organisation, but also the crossing of red lines by foreign countries with an anti-Israel agenda, which finance and invite him to provide ‘evidence’ against us”.

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