

Charter of the Palestine Mental Health Networks (PMHN)

Opening Statement

This charter governs the relationships and principles that unite these networks while respecting each network's autonomy within their respective countries and contexts.

The Palestine-Global Mental Health Network refers to the Palestine network, with "Global" referring to its inclusive reach - a platform for Palestinians engaged with mental health issues from across historic Palestine and the diaspora who are part of this foundational network. Palestine Mental Health Networks (PMHNs) refers to the collective of international networks that have formed in solidarity with and under the guidance of Palestinian leadership.

The Networks' mandate encompasses advocacy, education, and activism. While the Networks do not organize or provide clinical services, we are comprised of clinicians who will be able to make referrals.

Guiding Principles

Justice, Freedom, and Dignity:

We are committed to justice, freedom, and dignity for Palestine, and solidarity with oppressed and marginalized people worldwide, with the understanding that at this time Palestine will be our priority.

Palestinian Leadership:

We are guided by the vision of the Palestine-Global Mental Health Network, centering the leadership and priorities of our Palestinian colleagues and comrades.

Autonomy with Alignment:

Each network is autonomous in its internal governance and actions. Only the network in each country has the exclusive right to decide how Palestine advocacy operates in their country, while adhering to this charter. While promoting shared thinking and mutual reflection on their activism, no network may interfere with or dictate advocacy approaches in another country. Collective statements or actions require a two-thirds majority of all participating networks and must remain aligned with Palestine-Global's vision.

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS):

We fully endorse the Palestinian call for BDS and anti-normalization practices as stipulated by the BDS movement leadership as a nonviolent, principled strategy rooted in international law and anti-racist values.

Solidarity Across Struggles

We recognize that the struggles of oppressed groups worldwide are inherently connected to the liberation of Palestine through shared systems of oppression. Each

network maintains the autonomy to build alliances with other movements within their own countries as they deem appropriate, including movements for Indigenous rights, LGBTQ+ rights, children's rights, feminist and gender justice, prison and torture abolition, climate justice, and anti-racist/anti-fascist struggles. We acknowledge that each network is best positioned to determine which local partnerships align with its values, capacity, and strategic priorities.

Ethical Practice:

As mental health professionals, we commit to "first do no harm," refuse normalization of apartheid, genocide, and settler colonialism, and reject collaboration with institutions complicit in these systems.

Transparency and Care:

We uphold respectful communication, collective accountability, and the practice of collective care in all our work.

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Preamble

The Palestine Mental Health Networks (PMHN) are committed to justice, freedom, and dignity for Palestine, and to solidarity with oppressed and marginalized people worldwide, with the understanding that at this time Palestine will be our priority. Our work is grounded in the vision of the Palestine-Global Mental Health Network (Pal-Global), centering the leadership and demands of our Palestinian colleagues and comrades.

We affirm our values of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, feminism, democracy, human rights, and collective care. As mental health professionals and advocates, our duty is to tell the truth, refuse complicity with state violence, and work collectively toward liberation.

Article I: Guiding Principles

- Justice, Freedom, and Dignity for Palestine and oppressed peoples worldwide.
- Palestinian Leadership, guided by Pal-Global.
- Autonomy with Alignment: Networks act independently within their countries, with each network holding exclusive authority over Palestine advocacy in their nation. Collective actions require a two-thirds majority.
- Commitment to BDS as a principled, nonviolent framework.
- Solidarity Across Struggles: Supporting Indigenous, LGBTQ+, children's rights, feminist, abolitionist, anti-racist, and climate justice movements.
- Ethical Practice: Do no harm, refuse normalization, and reject collaboration with oppressive institutions.
- Transparency and Care in communication and accountability.

Article II: Mission and Objectives

The primary mission of the Palestine Mental Health Networks is to center Palestinian leadership and solidarity in the global mental health community while working toward justice, freedom, and dignity for Palestinian people. This mission recognizes that mental health is significantly impacted by the political and social conditions that shape people's lives, particularly under conditions of occupation, apartheid, and settler colonialism.

Supporting Palestinian colleagues involves both professional solidarity—such as amplifying Palestinian voices in international mental health forums, advocating for Palestinian mental health professionals' access to resources and opportunities, and challenging discriminatory practices. As well as political solidarity that recognizes the legitimacy of Palestinian resistance to the right to self-determination, and the recognition of the historical injustice inflicted on Palestinians, alongside the call for international support through BDS campaigns.

The networks commit to persistently raising awareness about Palestine within mental health services and professional organizations worldwide. This includes challenging the silence or neutrality that often characterizes professional mental health organizations regarding Palestinian suffering, educating mental health professionals about the psychological impacts of occupation and apartheid, and advocating for professional organizations to take principled stands in support of Palestinian rights.

Contributing to dialogue on settler colonialism and mental health involves developing theoretical frameworks, research initiatives, and practical approaches that recognize settler colonialism as a determinant of mental health. This work includes examining how settler colonial structures impact both colonized and colonizing populations, and how mental health practice can either reinforce or challenge these systems.

The commitment to linking Palestine with other struggles against oppression reflects an understanding that Palestinian liberation is connected to broader movements for justice worldwide. This involves building coalitions, sharing strategies and analyses, and recognizing the common threads that connect struggles against racism, colonialism, and other forms of systemic oppression.

Article III: Membership

Eligibility

Summary:

The Network's guiding principles and objectives is centering the voice of Palestinians, BDS and anti-normalization. Accordingly, members from any country are welcome to establish a Palestine Mental Health Network in their country with the understanding that they are committed to these core principles.

Membership in the Palestine Mental Health Networks is open to mental health professionals, advocates, and students who are aligned with the mission, principles, and values outlined in this Charter. This includes qualified and trainee clinicians in all fields of mental health and social work, researchers in these fields, service users, and any person with a concern for psycho-social health.

Commitment to the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) is a requirement for membership. This commitment involves 'both endorsing BDS as a strategy and actively... in professional practice. The latter may include refusing to participate in conferences or collaborations that whitewash Israeli apartheid, divesting from institutions complicit in Palestinian oppression, and supporting sanctions against Israeli academic and professional institutions that are complicit in violations of Palestinian rights.

Alignment with the mission extends beyond formal endorsement to include active engagement with the principles of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and solidarity with oppressed peoples. Members are expected to approach their professional work with an understanding of how mental health intersects with social justice and to work toward transforming mental health practice to better serve marginalized communities.

Admission Process

The admission process for new national or regional networks is designed to ensure that all participating networks understand and embrace the foundational principles of Palestinian leadership and solidarity. Prospective networks must engage in an orientation process with Pal-Global, which serves as the coordinating body and represents the leadership of Palestinian mental health professionals.

This orientation process includes education about the specific vision and principles that guide the PMHN, discussion of how BDS principles should be implemented in different national contexts, sharing of strategies and approaches developed by existing networks, and assessment of the prospective network's capacity to contribute meaningfully to collective goals while maintaining local relevance and complete autonomy over their national advocacy approach.

The requirement for Palestinian leadership guidance ensures that the networks remain accountable to Palestinian mental health professionals and avoid the common pitfall of solidarity movements that inadvertently center non-Palestinian voices or priorities. This process helps maintain the integrity and coherence of the movement while allowing for adaptation to diverse national contexts and preserving each network's exclusive authority over how Palestine advocacy operates within their country.

Member Obligations

Summary: Members commit to:

- Active participation in network activities
- Upholding BDS principles in their professional practice
- Engaging in respectful, transparent communication
- Respecting other networks' sovereignty over their national advocacy approaches

Active participation involves more than symbolic membership and requires genuine engagement with network activities, campaigns, and collective decision-making processes. This may include participating in meetings, contributing to collective

actions, sharing resources and expertise, and taking on responsibilities that advance the network's mission within their local contexts.

Upholding BDS principles requires ongoing commitment to implementing boycott, divestment, and sanctions strategies in professional practice and institutional involvement. This includes making ethical choices about professional affiliations, conference participation, and collaborative relationships that may inadvertently support Israeli institutions complicit in apartheid and occupation.

The commitment to respectful, transparent communication recognizes that effective collective action requires trust, accountability, and constructive dialogue among network members. This includes engaging disagreements constructively, sharing information openly, honoring confidentiality when appropriate, and maintaining communications that support rather than undermine collective goals and relationships.

Members affirm and support the complete sovereignty of each network in determining their national advocacy approaches, trusting in the wisdom and expertise of local organizers to shape Palestine solidarity work in ways that best serve their communities and contexts.

Article IV: Governance Structure

Network Autonomy and Alignment

The principle of "Autonomy with Alignment" recognizes that each network operates within its own national, cultural, and institutional context while remaining committed to the collective vision. Individual networks have complete discretion over their internal organizational structure, local campaigns, public statements on behalf of their network alone, advocacy strategies within their country, and day-to-day operations. This autonomy allows networks to respond effectively to local conditions and opportunities while maintaining their connection to the broader movement.

No network may interfere with, override, or dictate how another network conducts Palestine advocacy within that network's home country. Each network serves as the sole authority on advocacy approaches, strategic decisions, messaging, and implementation within their national context. This principle protects the sovereignty of each network and prevents external interference in local decision-making.

Networks in each country operate autonomously, conducting campaigns tailored to their local contexts. However, when any action, statement, or campaign is intended to represent the Palestine Mental Health Networks as a collective entity, it must undergo a collaborative decision-making process. Such collective actions require discussion among all networks and formal adoption by a two-thirds majority. This ensures that collective statements reflect broad consensus while respecting the diversity of perspectives within the networks.

All collective actions must remain aligned with the vision and leadership of Pal-Global, ensuring that the voices and priorities of Palestinian mental health professionals remain central to the movement's direction. When concerns arise about potential risks to the movement's credibility or the safety of

colleagues—particularly those in vulnerable positions—Pal-Global, in consultation with a two-thirds majority of networks, may request modifications to proposed actions or their postponement.

Actions Coordination Committee

Summary:

- Chair: Pal-Global
- Function: Facilitate decision-making on collective actions, ensuring alignment with Palestinian leadership and coordinating implementation of approved initiatives

The Actions Coordination Committee serves as the primary mechanism for facilitating collective decision-making and coordinating implementation of actions that represent the PMHN as a whole. Chaired by Pal-Global, this committee ensures that all collective initiatives remain grounded in Palestinian leadership and responsive to the needs and priorities identified by Palestinian mental health professionals.

The committee's responsibilities include facilitating discussions about proposed collective actions, coordinating the decision-making process that requires a two-thirds majority of all networks, and overseeing the implementation of approved collective initiatives. The committee also serves as the primary liaison point for communications between networks regarding collective actions and maintains oversight of campaigns that span multiple networks or represent the PMHN internationally.

All decisions regarding collective actions—whether statements, campaigns, or other initiatives—require approval by a two-thirds majority of all participating networks. This democratic process ensures that collective actions have broad support within the movement while maintaining efficiency in decision-making. The committee facilitates this process but does not itself determine the content or direction of collective actions, nor does it interfere with individual networks' sovereignty over their national advocacy approaches.

Decision-Making Process

The PMHN operates on a principle of democratic decision-making that respects both network autonomy and collective accountability. Each network retains complete authority over its internal affairs, including governance structure, membership policies, local campaigns, national advocacy strategies and approaches, and statements issued solely on behalf of that network. This autonomy ensures that networks can respond effectively to their specific contexts and maintain organizational flexibility without external interference.

For any action, statement, or campaign intended to represent the collective voice of the Palestine Mental Health Networks, a formal decision-making process is required. Such collective initiatives must be proposed to all networks, discussed thoroughly to allow for input and refinement, and formally approved by a two-thirds majority of all participating networks. This threshold ensures that collective actions have substantial support while allowing for meaningful deliberation and consensus-building.

The two-thirds majority requirement applies to all collective decision-making, including public statements, joint campaigns, endorsements made on behalf of the PMHN, partnerships with other organizations, and amendments to this Charter. This democratic process protects the integrity of the collective voice while ensuring that decisions reflect the genuine consensus of the membership rather than simple majority rule.

Article V: Operations

Meetings and Communication

Regular communication and coordination among networks is essential to maintaining the collective vision and effectiveness of the PMHN. The networks commit to holding two coordination meetings each month, with scheduling designed to accommodate the global distribution of participating networks across multiple time zones. These meetings provide opportunities for networks to share updates on their activities, discuss potential collective actions, coordinate campaigns, and address any challenges or opportunities facing the movement.

Meeting minutes serve as the official record of collective discussions and decisions. These minutes will be distributed to all network members promptly after each meeting and maintained in a centralized, accessible location managed under the Pal-Global email account. This ensures transparency and allows all members to stay informed about collective activities, even if they cannot attend every meeting.

The regular meeting schedule also provides a structured forum for the decision-making processes outlined in this Charter, ensuring that collective actions can be discussed, refined, and voted upon in a timely manner while allowing adequate time for deliberation and input from all networks.

Article VI: Partnerships and Alliances

The Palestine Mental Health Networks recognize that Palestinian liberation and mental health justice are interconnected with broader movements for social justice, human rights, and systemic transformation. Collaboration with aligned organizations amplifies collective impact, shares resources and strategies, and builds the broad-based movements necessary for meaningful change.

Partnerships may include joint campaigns, shared educational initiatives, coordinated advocacy efforts, resource sharing, and mutual support for members facing institutional retaliation for their solidarity work. Such collaborations strengthen the capacity of all participating organizations while maintaining the distinct identity and mission of each network within the PMHN.

Alignment Requirement

Summary: Collaborations must involve groups whose principles align with this Charter.

All partnerships and collaborative relationships must be evaluated for alignment with the fundamental principles outlined in this Charter, including commitment to

Palestinian liberation, anti-colonial and anti-racist analysis, and dedication to justice for oppressed peoples worldwide. This requirement protects the integrity of the PMHN mission and ensures that collaborative relationships advance rather than compromise the networks' goals.

Alignment assessment includes evaluation of potential partners' stated positions on Palestinian rights, their track record of solidarity with oppressed peoples, their commitment to challenging rather than reinforcing systems of oppression, and their willingness to take principled stands even when such positions may be professionally or politically costly. Organizations that maintain neutrality on issues of fundamental human rights or that collaborate with institutions complicit in oppression would not meet alignment requirements.

Network Sovereignty and Expertise

Summary:

- Networks launch their own actions independently unless they decide to join forces. Each network serves as the sole authority on their home country context, governance structure, and action implementation within their nation.
- No network may interfere with, override, or dictate how another network conducts Palestine advocacy within that network's home country.
- Networks independently determine participation in their initiatives and maintain exclusive control over advocacy strategies within their national context.

Each network maintains complete sovereignty over launching, designing, and implementing independent actions and campaigns within their country, operating independently unless they choose to collaborate. This includes exclusive authority over scope, timing, messaging, strategic approach, and advocacy methods, recognizing that each network possesses unique expertise regarding their local political, cultural, and institutional landscape.

Networks serve as the sole experts and authorities regarding their home countries or regions, including local political dynamics, institutional relationships, professional cultures, legal frameworks, and strategic considerations. Other networks must respect and defer to this local expertise and may not interfere with, override, or attempt to dictate advocacy approaches in other countries.

Each network retains exclusive authority to determine who participates in their independent actions and campaigns, whether inviting broadly, selectively, or working alone based on their assessment of local effectiveness and strategic needs. This sovereignty extends to all aspects of national advocacy, including messaging, tactics, timing, and partnerships within their country.

This sovereignty ensures networks can respond rapidly to local opportunities while maintaining accountability to the broader movement's principles and preserving the collective identity that unites all participating networks. Any attempt by one network to interfere with another's national advocacy violates this fundamental principle of network sovereignty.

Review Process and Consequences of Discontinuation

The review process for existing partnerships involves ongoing assessment of whether collaborative relationships continue to serve the mission and principles of the PMHN. When concerns arise about a partner organization's alignment with Charter principles, these concerns will be brought to the collective for discussion and evaluation. Such concerns might include changes in the partner organization's positions, actions that undermine Palestinian solidarity, or evidence of collaboration with institutions complicit in oppression.

The decision to discontinue a partnership requires a two-thirds majority of all participating networks, ensuring that such decisions reflect broad consensus rather than immediate reactions or minor disagreements. This process includes opportunity for discussion, investigation of concerns, and consideration of whether issues can be addressed through dialogue before resorting to discontinuation.

When a relationship is discontinued, particularly in cases where a network itself is found to be in fundamental contradiction with Charter principles, specific consequences ensure the protection of the PMHN identity and mission. The affected network must immediately cease use of all PMHN logos, branding materials, and identifying symbols, and must change its name to remove any reference to the Palestine Mental Health Networks or related terminology.

This process acknowledges that new networks may be established within the same geographic region or institutional context, following the proper admission procedures outlined in this Charter. This provision ensures that geographic regions are not permanently excluded from participation due to the actions of individual networks that may have lost alignment with Charter principles, while maintaining clear boundaries around the use of PMHN identity and affiliation.

Article VII: Areas of Solidarity

The PMHN may align with and support movements including, but not limited to:

- The rights and struggles of Indigenous peoples worldwide
- The rights of LGBTQ+ communities, including transgender and gender-diverse peoples, and those facing discrimination based on sexual orientation
- Children's rights, particularly for those under conditions of war, displacement, or occupation
- Abolitionist campaigns, including opposition to prisons, mass incarceration, and torture
- Anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles globally
- Climate justice and environmental protection movements that resist extractive systems threatening life and health
- Feminist and gender justice movements fighting patriarchal violence and exploitation

Article VIII: Ethical Principles

The principle of "first, do no harm" extends beyond individual clinical practice to encompass our collective professional and political engagement. In the context of Palestinian solidarity, this means refusing to participate in activities, institutions, or

practices that contribute to the harm experienced by Palestinian people under occupation and apartheid. It requires careful consideration of how our professional choices and institutional affiliations may inadvertently support systems of oppression, even when such support is indirect or unintended.

The refusal to normalize apartheid, genocide, or settler colonialism represents a fundamental ethical stance that recognizes these systems as inherently incompatible with mental health and wellbeing. Normalization occurs when institutions or individuals treat these systems as acceptable, inevitable, or merely one side of a complex conflict rather than as violations of human rights and dignity. Mental health professionals have a particular responsibility to name and oppose systems that cause psychological harm, rather than treating their effects as individual pathology disconnected from political context.

Our commitment to truth-telling involves consistently naming the realities of Palestinian experience under occupation and apartheid, even when such truth-telling is professionally or personally costly. This includes challenging dominant narratives that obscure or minimize Palestinian suffering, educating colleagues and institutions about the mental health impacts of settler colonialism, and refusing to participate in false equivalencies that treat oppressor and oppressed as morally equivalent.

The principle of collective care recognizes that individual wellbeing cannot be separated from collective liberation and that our work must be grounded in practices that sustain both personal resilience and collective struggle. This includes creating support systems for members engaged in difficult advocacy work, practicing solidarity that centers the most vulnerable, and building sustainable approaches to activism that can be maintained over the long term required for systemic change.

Article IX: Amendment Process

This Charter may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of participating networks, with each network holding one vote and determining internally how its vote is decided, ensuring continued alignment with Pal-Global's vision and Palestinian leadership.

Article X: Adoption and Ratification

This Charter represents the shared vision, principles, and commitments of the Palestine Mental Health Networks. It is signed and endorsed by all participating networks and reaffirmed as new networks join.

Effective Date:

Signatory Networks: