

MADA Welcomes EU Adoption of Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy

Ramallah - 27 June 2012: The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) welcomes the European Council's adoption of the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy with an Action Plan for putting it into practice. This is the first time that the European Union has had a unified Strategic Framework for this vital policy area and such a wide-ranging plan of action for its implementation.

While MADA already appreciates the European Union's support for the Palestinian people, MADA is greatly pleased about the inclusion of human rights in all EU policies for the promotion of the cause of human rights everywhere.

MADA hopes that this Strategic Framework will be reflected in EU policies towards the Israeli occupation and its continued violations against Palestinian human rights in general and freedom of expression in particular. In the last four years, MADA has documented 559 Israeli violations against media freedoms, including the murder of five Palestinian journalists. MADA believes that these violations would not continue were it not for the international community's general silence. Very few official condemnations have been made.

MADA highlights the important proposal of Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, to appoint an EU Special Representative on Human Rights. This will aid in implementing the Strategic Framework and its Action Plan.

The EU and other countries, especially the United States, must link their diplomatic relations with Israel with their commitment to human rights. This would be an important and essential step to compel the Israeli government to respect international conventions on human rights and freedom of expression. This would also communicate to Israel that it is not above international law, even though it has largely ignored them in the last few decades without being subject to punishment or reprisal.

