

Human Rights Advisory Committee Assessment on Israel/Palestine: Conclusion of Phase 1 and Next Steps

UM Announcement

Mandate and Assessment Process

The Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC), pursuant to its mandate as established in the Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) Framework, supports the Maastricht University community in its mission to contribute positively to the protection and promotion of human rights globally—particularly in contexts where international crimes and/or serious human rights violations are occurring.

In line with this mandate, the Committee advises the Executive Board on whether there are serious indications that international crimes or serious human rights violations are taking place in, or are being committed by, a country in which Maastricht University has institutional partnerships, and whether a partner institution is contributing to such acts.

As indicated in the HRDD Framework, HRDD assessments may be initiated in relation to existing, new, or renewed institutional strategic partnerships involving Maastricht University. These assessments are carried out in two phases:

- Phase 1: Country-Level Assessment – The Committee first determines whether there are serious indications that international crimes or serious human rights violations are taking place in, or are being committed by, the country in which the partner institution is based or operates.
- Phase 2: Partner-Level Assessment – If serious indications are found at the country level, the Committee may proceed to assess whether the partner institution is contributing to such violations.

The findings below summarise the Committee's conclusions for Phase 1 concerning Israel/Palestine.

Findings from the Country-Level Assessment (Phase 1) of Israel/Palestine

Following a thorough review of decisions by international and national courts, UN reports, and corroborated NGO findings, the **HRAC has concluded that there are serious indications that Israel has committed and continues to commit multiple international crimes and serious human rights violations, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and potentially acts of genocide.**

This conclusion is based on evidence from independent, impartial, and authoritative institutions, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), the UN Commission of Inquiry, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and a judgment of the Hague Court of Appeal. It is further supported by respected NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

The HRAC has taken into account international crimes and serious human rights violations committed in Israel by non-state armed groups, including Hamas, and notes that there are serious indications that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed by such actors in Israel. The Committee has not examined international crimes and serious violations committed in Palestine by the State of Palestine or Palestine-based groups, as Maastricht University currently appears to have no strategic partnerships in Palestine. Should such partnerships emerge, the Phase 1 report will be revised to include analysis of such international crimes or serious violations of human rights.

Taken together, these findings constitute a robust and deeply corroborated body of evidence that not only meets but exceeds the evidentiary threshold required by the HRDD Framework for establishing serious indications of international crimes and serious violations of human rights committed in and by Israel.

Next Steps: Transition to Phase 2 and Communication

The Committee is currently assessing Phase 2 of Israel/Palestine. This phase entails assessing whether there are serious indications that one or more partner institutions located in Israel/Palestine are contributing to such acts, and the evaluation of existing UM partnerships in relation to such acts. As part of this phase, the Committee has launched a consultation process. Relevant information, including how to participate, can be found in the Committee's [update of 3 June 2025](#), circulated via UMPLOYEE on the HRAC group page and in the Student Newsletter.

Maastricht University froze all institutional partnerships with Israel in 2024. The purpose of Phase 2 is to advise the Executive Board on whether these suspended agreements should be formally terminated or resumed; and, where relevant, under which conditions. Having reached the conclusion that the threshold for Phase 1 on Israel/Palestine has been met, the HRDD Framework foresees that the Executive Board enter into contact with relevant institutions in Israel/Palestine to inform them that the University is proceeding to Phase 2 of the assessment.

The purpose of sharing this phase 1 finding is also to notify the UM community—especially individual staff members who are contemplating or currently engaged in individual collaborations with Israeli universities—that they are strongly encouraged to conduct an Individual Activity HRDD Assessment or seek advice from the Committee before proceeding.