

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S UNION LEADER RELEASED

Palestinian women's union leader Khitam Saafin was released from HaSharon prison in Israel on 1 October after serving three months in administrative detention without charge or trial. Member of the Palestinian parliament, Khalida Jarrar remains held in HaSharon prison under a six month administrative detention order.

On 1 October, **Khitam Saafin** was released from HaSharon prison in Israel after serving the entirety of her three month administrative detention term. According to Addameer Association's lawyers who represent both women, the Israel military commander issued a three-month administrative detention order, without charge or trial, against Khitam Saafin on 9 July. The decision was confirmed by a military judge on 12 July. Israeli authorities accused Khitam Saafin of membership in an illegal organization, which she denied.

Following her release, Khitam Saafin spoke to Amnesty International on 4 October and shared the following message: "I am thankful to those who took action on my behalf. I am also happy that I am released but at the same time sad that I left 56 women in Israeli jails who are suffering from poor conditions, especially those that need medical treatment."

Khalida Jarrar, who is an elected parliamentarian, has been held in HaSharon prison inside Israel since 2 July. She was given a six-month administrative detention order on 12 July and a military judge confirmed the decision on 18 July. This order is expected to end on 2 January 2018. Although six months is the maximum period of detention for each order, they can be renewed indefinitely, and there is no guarantee that she will be released then.

The transfer of Khalida Jarrar to HaSharon prison violates international humanitarian law. Detainees from occupied territories must be detained in the occupied territory, not in the territory of the occupying power. Like Khitam Saafin, Israeli authorities accuse Khalida Jarrar of membership in an illegal organization, which she denies.

Please write immediately in English, Hebrew or your own language calling on the Israeli authorities to:

- Release Khalida Jarrar and all other administrative detainees or to promptly charge them with an internationally recognizable criminal offense and try them in proceedings that adhere to international fair trial standards;
- Take immediate steps to end the practice of administrative detention.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 NOVEMBER 2017 TO:

Minister of Defence

Avigdor Leiberman
Ministry of Defence
37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia
Tel Aviv 61909, Israel
Email: minister@mod.gov.il
pniot@mod.gov.il
Fax: +972 3 691 6940
Salutation: Dear Minister

Commander of the IDF – West Bank

Major-General Roni Numa
GOC Central Command
Military Post 02367, Battalion 877
Israel Defence Forces, Israel
Fax: +972 2 530 5741, +972 2 530 5724
Salutation: Dear Major-General Roni Numa

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security

Gilad Erdan
Kiryat Hamemshala
PO Box 18182
Jerusalem 91181, Israel
Fax: +972 2 584 7872
Email: gerdan@knesset.gov.il
Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR MARK REGEV, Embassy of Israel, 2 Palace Green Kensington W8 4QB, 020 7957 9500

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 187/17. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/6859/2017/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Khitam Saafin, aged 54, is the president of the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, an organization that works for community-based economic and social development of women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. She has been an outspoken activist for Palestinian women's economic, national, and social liberation for decades both locally and in international forums. She is also a prominent educator and civil society leader. According to a family member, Khitam Saafin's youngest child, aged 18, was called to an interview with an Israeli intelligence officer at Ofer military base following his last trip home in January from Cyprus, where he attends university. He was interrogated about his social and political views, his activities and those of his mother. The intelligence officer who questioned him appears to be the same intelligence officer who was present during the arrest of Khitam Saafin on 2 July.

Khalida Jarrar, aged 54, is an elected Palestinian parliamentarian and outspoken critic of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and of Palestinian security cooperation with the Israeli military. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Addameer Association, a human rights organization, and an appointed member of the Palestinian Higher National Committee to Follow-up with the International Criminal Court. She has been a strong advocate for the rights of Palestinian prisoners and their families. Khalida Jarrar has been subjected to decades of harassment and intimidation by the Israeli authorities, including a travel ban imposed since 1998. The ban was lifted once for a couple of days in 2010 to allow her to travel for medical tests in Jordan for a serious chronic medical issue. Israeli authorities have repeatedly declared her a security risk, but did not charge her with any criminal offence until April 2015. On 2 April 2015, she was arrested by Israeli soldiers at her home in Ramallah, and placed under administrative detention. On 15 April 2015, at the review hearing of her administrative detention order, the military prosecution brought 12 charges against her relating to membership of the banned political party Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and incitement to kidnap Israeli soldiers. She has vehemently denied this accusation and her lawyers have claimed that it has no basis. Following an unfair trial in an Israeli military court, Khalida Jarrar was convicted of four of the charges, including incitement. She served 14 months in prison and was released in June 2016 with a five-year suspended sentence.

Both women were arrested by Israeli soldiers during pre-dawn raids on their homes on 2 July. According to eyewitnesses, at 3:30am that day, between 40 and 50 armed Israeli soldiers conducted a raid on Khitam Saafin's home in Beitunia, a neighbourhood of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, in order to arrest her. On the same morning at around 4am, a similar Israeli military raid was carried out to arrest Khalida Jarrar in her home in Ramallah. In the raid, the soldiers also confiscated Khalida Jarrar's phone, tablet and the hard drive of her home computer.

Administrative detention – ostensibly introduced as an exceptional measure to detain people who pose an extreme and imminent danger to security – is used by Israel as an alternative to the criminal justice system to arrest, charge and prosecute people suspected of criminal offences, or to detain people who should not have been arrested at all. Although six months is the maximum period of detention for each order, they can be renewed indefinitely and Amnesty International believes that some Palestinians held in administrative detention by Israel are prisoners of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association.

According to the Israeli human rights organization Hamoked, as of September 2017, there were 477 administrative detainees held without charge or trial by Israel.

Further information on UA: 187/17 Index: MDE 15/7232/2017 Issue Date: 9 October 2017