

URGENT ACTION

NGO WORKER'S ARBITRARY DETENTION PROLONGED

On 5 March, an Israel court confirmed the renewal of the administrative detention of NGO worker Salah Hammouri for a further four months. He is a field researcher for Palestinian NGO Addameer and has been held by Israel without charge or trial since 23 August 2017.

On 26 February, an Israeli district court in Jerusalem renewed the administrative detention order against **Salah Hammouri**, a French-Palestinian NGO worker, for a further four months. His detention is now expected to end on 28 June. Salah Hammouri, who is currently held in Ketziot prison in southern Israel, had been given a six-month administrative detention order on 29 August 2017, which was confirmed on 17 September 2017. It was set to end on 26 February 2018. The same court confirmed the renewal on 5 March.

The court had been due to hold the hearing to confirm the renewal on 1 March, but postponed it because Salah Hammouri's lawyers had decided to boycott the session, as part of an ongoing protest by Palestinian detainees and their lawyers to demand an end to the policy of administrative detention. In the same context, on 13 February, Palestinians imprisoned by Israel without charge or trial under administrative detention had issued a statement (<http://cda.gov.ps/index.php/ar/ar-news/5025-2018-02-20-08-49-53>) to say that they would begin a boycott campaign against military courts starting from 15 February.

Israeli forces detained Salah Hammouri during an overnight raid on 23 August 2017 at his home in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Kafr Aqab. Salah Hammouri is a resident of East Jerusalem. He works as a field researcher in Jerusalem for Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, a Palestinian human rights organization based in Ramallah. Khalida Jarrar, a board member of Addameer, has also been held in administrative detention since 2 July 2017, and three staff members of the organization are banned by the Israeli authorities from travelling outside Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).

Please write immediately in Hebrew, English or your own language:

- Calling on the Israeli authorities to release Salah Hammouri, and all others who have been placed under administrative detention, unless they are promptly charged with an internationally recognizable crime and tried in proceedings that adhere to international fair trial standards;
- Calling on the Israeli authorities to stop the harassment and arbitrary detention of Palestinian human rights workers including Addameer staff and board members;
- Urging the Israeli authorities to take immediate steps to end the practice of administrative detention.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 APRIL 2018 TO:

Minister of Defence

Avigdor Liberman
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, info@london.mfa.gov.il Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 226/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/7211/2017/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Salah Hammouri was arrested during an overnight raid on 23 August 2017 at his home in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Kafr Aqab. He was then transferred to the Israel Security Agency (ISA) detention centre within the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. On 5 September, the day of a hearing to confirm the six-month administrative detention order he was given on 17 August, an Israeli district court in Jerusalem decided instead to reinstate three of the six months remaining from a prison sentence Salah Hammouri had served following a conviction in 2005. The prosecution appealed against the decision, requesting that the period of imprisonment be extended. However, on 13 September, Israel's High Court overruled the reinstatement of the sentence. On 17 September, the district court in Jerusalem confirmed the initial six-month administrative detention order.

According to Addameer, on 2 January, Hammouri was transferred by the Israel Prison Service (IPS) from Ketziot prison to Megiddo prison, north of Israel, as a punishment for doing an interview with a French journalist in which he discussed the policy of administrative detention. Hammouri stayed in Megiddo prison until 29 January and then was sent back to Ketziot prison.

Israeli authorities had previously imprisoned Salah Hammouri for seven years and released him as part of a prisoner exchange deal in 2011. The Israeli authorities banned the East Jerusalem resident from entering the occupied West Bank until September 2016, and have banned his wife Elsa Lefort, also a French national, from entering the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) or Israel since 2016. In February 2016, Salah Hammouri's wife was deported from Israel after being detained for three days at a detention centre near Ben Gurion airport. As a result, his wife and two-year-old child have not been able to see him since his arrest. Salah Hammouri's family, including his wife, child and father in-law, have been harassed and threatened by unknown people, after a French website published their contact details.

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 arresting, charging and prosecuting people suspected of criminal offences, or to detain people who should not have been arrested at all. Orders can be renewed indefinitely and evidence is kept secret, meaning that detainees are not able to effectively challenge their detention and do not know when they will be released. 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, assembly or association. Since October 2015, violence in Israel and the OPT has increased dramatically. As during other periods of heightened tension in the OPT, the Israeli authorities have responded by carrying out mass arrests, issuing more and more administrative detention orders, and resuming its use against children. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, as of January 2018, there were 437 administrative detainees held without charge or trial by Israel.

All but one of the Israeli prisons holding Palestinian administrative detainees are located inside Israel. The detention of Palestinians from the OPT inside Israel violates international law. The Fourth Geneva Convention stipulates that detainees from occupied territories must be held in the occupied territory, not in the territory of the occupying power.

Amnesty International has documented an escalation of acts of intimidation by the Israeli government against human rights activists in the OPT. Israel has also taken steps to curtail freedom of expression inside Israel with officials using intimidation and smear campaigns to target human rights organizations and their staff.

Further information on UA: 226/17 Index: MDE 15/7967/2018 Issue Date: 08 March 2018