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## **Urgent Appeal: Ban on Entering the West Bank Imposed on Addameer Board Member Abdullatif Ghaith**

11 October 2011

Addameer expresses its utmost dismay at the imposition of a six-month ban on entry into the West Bank (as defined by Israel) on the Chairman of its Board of Directors, Abdullatif Ghaith. Mr. Ghaith, a 70-year-old East Jerusalem resident, is one of the founders of Addameer and has been serving on the Board for the past twenty years, in addition to his other activities in the field of human rights in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

*Ramallah, 11 October 2011* – Addameer expresses its utmost dismay at the imposition of a six-month ban on entry into the West Bank (as defined by Israel) on the Chairman of its Board of Directors, Abdullatif Ghaith. Mr. Ghaith, a 70-year-old East Jerusalem resident, is one of the founders of Addameer and has been serving on the Board for the past twenty years, in addition to his other activities in the field of human rights in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

On 10 October 2011, Mr. Ghaith received a phone call from al-Moskobiyyeh detention and interrogation center in Jerusalem, requesting him to appear for interrogation later that day. When he arrived at al-Moskobiyyeh, Mr. Ghaith was handed a military order banning him from entering the West Bank for a period of six months but was given no further information on the reasons for these arbitrary restrictions. The order, which was signed by the Israeli military commander of the West Bank, Avi Mizrahi, on 9 October, is due to expire on 3 April 2012. Echoing the vague phrasing of Israeli administrative detention orders against Palestinians, the order states that the ban on 70-year-old Mr. Ghaith was deemed necessary to protect the security and public order of the “area”, i.e. the West Bank. Furthermore, the order specifies that any other “permits” regulating Mr. Ghaith’s entry into the West Bank, whether personal or general, are effectively canceled, erroneously implying that East Jerusalem residents require permission to travel into the rest of the West Bank.

Addameer strongly condemns the ban imposed on Mr. Ghaith, which not only violates his fundamental human rights, namely his right to freedom of movement, but also disregards the special protections afforded to him as a human rights defender according to the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on human rights defenders. “Human rights defenders” are formally defined as persons who work, non-violently, for any or all of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Mr. Ghaith’s work on behalf of political prisoners—inspired by his own experience as a prisoner, most recently as an administrative detainee from June 2004 to January 2005—clearly falls within the category of a human rights defender, in that his activities are peaceful in nature and aimed

at the promotion of human rights. Furthermore, Addameer stresses that the *de facto* annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel has never been recognized and violates international humanitarian and customary law. As such, Mr. Gaith, who resides in East Jerusalem, already finds himself in the West Bank, effectively rendering the ban meaningless.

Addameer therefore calls on the international community to intervene immediately with the Israeli authorities to lift the absurd ban on Mr. Gaith's entry into the West Bank so that he may continue to carry out his work unimpeded.

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