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## Human Rights Defenders

### Human Rights Defenders:

According to the United Nations, a *Human rights defender* is an individual, “who, individually or with others, act[s] to promote or protect human rights.” A Human Rights defender, according to the United Nations, is an individual who works in:

- ***Address[ing] any human right (or rights) on behalf of individuals or groups. Human rights defenders seek the promotion and protection of civil and political rights as well as the promotion, protection and realization of economic, social and cultural rights.***
- ***Seek[ing] to promote and protect human rights in the context of a variety of challenges, including HIV/AIDS, development, migration, structural adjustment policies and political transition.***
- ***Working at the local or national level, supporting respect for human rights within their own communities and countries.***
- ***Act[ing] at the regional or international level. They may, for example, monitor a regional or worldwide human rights situation and submit information to regional or international human rights mechanisms, including the other special rapporteurs of the United Nations Human Rights Council and treaty bodies.***
- ***Collecting and disseminating information on violations***

- ***Investigat[ing], gather[ing] information regarding and report on human rights violations.***
  
- ***Supporting victims of human rights violations***
  
- ***Investigating and reporting on violations can help end ongoing violations, prevent their repetition and assist victims in taking their cases to courts.***
  
- ***Provid[ing] professional legal advice and represent victims in the judicial process. Others provide victims with counselling and rehabilitation support.***
  
- ***Action to secure accountability and to end impunity***
  
- ***Lobbying authorities and advocating greater efforts by the State to implement the international human rights obligations it has accepted by its ratification of international treaties.***
  
- ***Encouraging a Government as a whole to fulfill its human rights obligations, for example by publicizing information on the Government's record of implementation of human rights standards and monitoring progress made.***

The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders defines human rights defenders as individuals who play an important role in furthering the cause of human rights through activities such as the documentation of violations, providing support and assistance to victims seeking remedies, combating cultures of impunity and mainstreaming human rights culture and information on an international and domestic level. Human Rights Defenders in the occupied Palestinian territory face various types of harassment and rights violations by the occupation forces, irrespective of the protection afforded to them in international conventions, and particularly the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In 2014, the occupation forces intensified prosecution of human rights defenders in the occupied Palestinian territory, aiming to silence them and punish them for their role in exposing violations and crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people.

The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders defines human rights defenders as individuals who play an important role in furthering the cause of human rights through different activities. Palestinians

who organize and participate in protests and demonstrations for example against the Separation Wall and settlements are widely recognized as human rights defenders, due to their efforts to engage civil society in peaceful methods of resistance aimed at ending Israel's violations of human rights and international law and its practices of land confiscation, house demolitions and movement restrictions on the Palestinian population. Israel has adopted a policy of arrest, detention, intimidation, threats and, at times, collective punishment against communities who take part in weekly demonstrations and other non-violent actions against the occupation.

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Some of the protestors and human rights defenders are prosecuted in the Israeli Military Courts under Military order 101 which was issued by the Israeli military commander in August 1967 and is still in effect in the occupied West Bank despite the Oslo Agreement and the beginning of the Peace Process. Military order 101 criminalizes many civic activities including: organizing and participating in protests; taking part in assemblies or vigils; waving flags and other political symbols; printing and distributing of political material. In addition, the order deems any acts of influencing public opinion as prohibited "political incitement". Under the heading "support to a hostile organization", the order further prohibits any activity that demonstrates sympathy for an organization deemed illegal under military orders, be it chanting slogans, waving a flag or other political symbols.

Despite the lack of evidence or independent witnesses, and the vague or empty basis of the charges levied against human rights defenders, the vast majority of activists will be found guilty of committing a "security offense" and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. In the Israeli military courts, the accused's inalienable right to due process is never upheld. Soldiers' testimonies and, occasionally, photos of individuals at a demonstration, are very often sufficient for an individual to be found guilty of an offense under the military orders that govern the West Bank. Moreover, if the detainee has been coerced into signing a confession, they will invariably be sentenced and serve time in a military jail.

The Israeli occupation forces arrested 7 Palestinian journalists during 2015, bringing the number of journalists detained in Israeli jails to 18 journalists, six of whom were arrested during 2014. These arrests and prosecutions reached dozens of human rights activists, most of which were detained under administrative detention orders; this includes Addameer colleague Ayman Naser, the Coordinator of the Legal in Addameer. He was re-arrested under an administrative detention order on 18 September 2014. In addition, Mr. Osama Shaheen, Director of the Palestinian Prisoners Studies

Center, was arrested in December 2014.

Human rights defenders who have been arrested and detained include [Khalida Jarrar](#), a Palestinian Legislative Council Member, who was arrested on the 2nd of April 2015, hunger striking administrative detainee [Mohammad Al-Qeiq](#), and Director of Bisan, Eteraf Rimawi. Human rights defenders face ongoing forms of indiscriminate and arbitrary punishment long after they have been released. Requests from them and their families for permits from the Israeli authorities are consistently denied, they face targeted persecution and intimidation, detention and questioning at checkpoints, defamation, and, in some cases, re-arrest.

Following is a table of the names of journalists arrested by the occupation forces from January 2014 until January 2016:

Name	Place of Residence	Type of Arrest	Date of Arrest
Aziz Kayed	Ramallah	Charges	17/06/2014
Nidal Abu Aker	Bethlehem	Administrative Detention	28/06/2014
Bushra Tawil	Ramallah	Charges	02/07/2014
Ahmad Fathi Khatib	Tulkarem	Administrative Detention	04/07/2014
Hammam Atili	Tulkarem	Charges	12/08/2014
Lina Mohammad Atta Khattab	Ramallah	Charges	13/12/2014
Mohammed Atta	Ramallah	Charges	27/01/2015
Hamza Mohammed Safi	Tulkarem	Charges (3-month sentence).	15/12/2015
Ali Oweiwi	Hebron	Administrative Detention	21/10/2015
Mohammed Al-Qeiq	Ramallah	Administrative Detention	21/11/2015
Amjad Samhan	Ramallah	Awaiting trial	05/05/2015
Ahmad Khdeir	Nablus	Awaiting trial	01/06/2015
Hamam Atili	Tulkarem	-	08/12/2015
Mujahed Al-Sadi	Jeinen	Awaiting trial	12/01/2016
Mahmoud Al-Qawasmi	Hebron	Awaiting trial	31/01/2016
Mohammed Qadumi	Ramallah/ Birzeit	Administrative Detention	14/01/2016

Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association is also partnered with Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR) to provide practical and effective support for Palestinian human rights defenders in the occupied Palestinian territory that face the Israeli policy of arrest and intimidation. This is carried out by seeking the optimal implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (EU Guidelines). The aim of this is to establish a centralized mechanism to comprehensively monitor and compile all cases that are brought to our attention through our network of Palestinian grassroots organizations and popular committees. We then lobby EU member state diplomatic missions on a regular basis to take required action under the EU Guidelines. The EU Guidelines provide guidance for countries of the European Union to carry out their obligations to promote and respect the rights of human rights defenders and to protect them from attacks from state and non-state actors. In addition, we aim to support Palestinian Human Right Defenders by submitting UN complaints regarding the detention and harassment of several Human Right Defenders.

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