

**LPHR, Addameer and Fobzu statement on International Education Day:
Highlighting the systematic targeting of Palestinian university students for prolonged arbitrary
military detention by Israel's military authorities**



Layan Kayed; Ruba Asi; Elyaa Abu Hijla

London and Ramallah, 24 January 2021 – On UNESCO'S International Day of Education that celebrates the role of education for peace and development, Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (**LPHR**), Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (**Addameer**) and Friends of Birzeit University (**Fobzu**) issue an urgent call to the international community to intervene in the ongoing systematic targeting of Palestinian university students for prolonged arbitrary military detention by Israel's military authorities.

This punitive practice, in breach of international human rights law, has surged since August 2019, including a new disturbing pattern of increasingly targeting female Palestinian university students. This development was highlighted by LPHR and Addameer's [complaint](#) to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concerning the Israeli military authorities' ongoing unlawful arbitrary detention of three young female Palestinian Birzeit University students from the occupied West Bank: **Ms Layan Kayed (23)**, **Ms Elyaa Abu Hijla (21)** and **Ms Ruba Asi (20)**.

Layan, Elyaa and Ruba have been in continuous military detention since 8 June, 1 July and 9 July 2020 respectively, and have been identically charged with participation and affiliation of a democratic student association at Birzeit University. **On 22 December 2020, Elyaa was sentenced to 11 months imprisonment. Layan and Ruba's cases remain pending.**

These three cases are emblematic of young Palestinian university students being systematically criminalised and held in prolonged military detention due to peacefully exercising their basic rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression. It is also necessary to recognise the severe short-to-long term impacts of punitive military detention on their right to education. This trend represents one of a number of ways in which the right to education for Palestinians is denied today.

What we ask for

On International Day of Education, LPHR, Addameer and Fobzu urge the international community to **call for the immediate release of Ms Layan Kayed, Ms Elyaa Abu Hijla, Ms Ruba Asi, and other Palestinian university students** being detained for association with a university student group; **call upon Israeli military authorities to cease arresting, detaining, and/or charging Palestinian university students for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression;** **call for the end of the inadmissible use of military courts to try civilians**, including Palestinian university students; and **call for an end to the wide range of violations of the right to education for Palestinians.**

We will continue to closely monitor and work on protecting Palestinian university students from ongoing illegitimate targeting, harassment, humiliation and punishment, which is widespread, historic and systematic, and in clear violation of basic international human rights law protections.

About Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR)

[LPHR](#) is a lawyer-based legal charity in the UK that works on legal projects aimed at protecting and promoting Palestinian human rights.

About Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer)

[Addameer](#) is a Palestinian non-governmental, civil institution that works to support Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli and Palestinian prisons.

About Friends of Birzeit University (Fobzu)

[Fobzu](#) is a UK charity promoting Palestinian access to education since 1978.