

URGENT ACTION

PEACEFUL ACTIVIST FACING JAIL FOR PROTEST

Palestinian activist Abdallah Abu Rahma faces up to five years in jail as a prisoner of conscience: he will be sentenced by an Israeli military court on 5 January 2015. He was convicted on 21 October of charges relating to a 2012 protest.

Abdallah Abu Rahma was arrested on 10 May 2012 in a demonstration at the Bitunya checkpoint near the Israeli Ofer Military Prison to commemorate the Nakba (when more than 700,000 Palestinians lost their homes in 1948) and in support of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, many of whom were on hunger strike in protest at the conditions they were held in and Israel's detention of detaining Palestinians without trial.

Israeli forces detained him for standing in front of bulldozers which were bringing concrete blocks to be used as road blocks and defences. He was released on bail after a few hours and was only summonsed in February 2013 on charges of obstructing a soldier in the line of duty.

Abdallah Abu Rahma is the head of the Popular Committee Against the Wall in the occupied West Bank village of Bil'in which holds weekly protests against the Israeli "security" fence/wall. He actively promotes the use of peaceful means to raise international awareness of the human rights violations suffered by Palestinians because of Israel's fence/wall, much of which has been built in the occupied West Bank.

His sentence is also likely to be extended as a result of a suspended sentence he received relating to his 2010 conviction of charges including "incitement" and "organizing and participating in an illegal demonstration" between 2005 and 2009 and for which he was sentenced to 16 months in prison and a six-month suspended sentence. The military judge in this case accepted the prosecution's argument that Abdallah Abu Rahma had encouraged demonstrators in Bil'in to throw stones at Israeli soldiers. This was based on the statements of three children, who later retracted them in court, stating that they had been coerced. They did not understand Hebrew, the language in which their statements were written.

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

- Condemning the harassment of Abdallah Abu Rahma and calling on the authorities to ensure that all charges against him are dropped immediately since they relate to his peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Calling on them to guarantee the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly to Abdallah Abu Rahma and other Palestinian activists.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 JANUARY 2015 TO:

Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan St, PO Box 187
Kiryat Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem 91950, Israel
Email: b.netanyahu@pmo.gov.il
pm_eng@pmo.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Military Judge Advocate General

Brigadier General Danny Efroni
6 David Elazar Street
Hakiryia, Tel Aviv, Israel
Fax: +972 3 569 4526
Email: avimn@idf.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Judge Advocate General

And copies to:

Minister of Defence
Moshe Ya'alon
Ministry of Defence
37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia
Tel Aviv 61909, Israel
Fax: +972 3 691 6940
+972 3 696 2757

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abdallah Abu Rahma is well known to Amnesty International as a political activist with a long-term public commitment to using peaceful means to raise international awareness of the human rights violations suffered by Palestinians as a result of Israel's fence/wall. He is the head of the Popular Committee Against the Wall in the West Bank village of Bil'in, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The committee holds weekly protests against the 700km fence/wall, which is built mainly on Palestinian land, separating many Palestinians from their land. Since 2005, the villagers of Bil'in, together with Palestinian, Israeli and international supporters, have been holding weekly demonstrations in protest against the fence/wall and the confiscation of their land by the Israeli authorities for its construction.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank are also protesting against other repressive policies and practices of the prolonged Israeli occupation, including the ever-expanding unlawful Israeli settlements established within the occupied West Bank, house demolitions, Israeli military checkpoints, roads reserved for use by Israeli settlers from which Palestinians are excluded, and other restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the OPT. More than a dozen Palestinian villages and communities in the West Bank that are most directly affected by the location of the fence/wall or of Jewish-only settlements built on Palestinian land hold weekly demonstrations to protest against Israeli policies and their impact. They include the villages of Nabi Saleh, Bil'in, Ni'lin and Kufr Qadum, and urban centres such as Hebron and East Jerusalem. Protests are also held against the imprisonment and detention of thousands of Palestinian activists and their treatment in Israeli prisons, and in response to developments such as Israeli military strikes in Gaza and the killing or injuring of Palestinians in protests or during raids.

In September 2007 the Israeli High Court of Justice issued a ruling instructing the Israeli military authorities to reroute the fence/wall in Bil'in to give the villagers access to more of their land, but this ruling has yet to be fully implemented. The right to peaceful protest is very important for Palestinians in the OPT, as they have no other way, such as voting, to influence the policy of the occupying power. They are frequently met by the use of excessive force by Israeli forces. For more information, see *Trigger-happy: Israel's use of excessive force in the West Bank* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/002/2014/en/349188ef-e14a-418f-ac20-6c9e5c8d9f88/mde150022014en.pdf>).

Name: Abdallah Abu Rahma
Gender m/f: m

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