

URGENT ACTION

SUSPENDED SENTENCE FOR ABDALLAH ABU RAHMA
Abdallah Abu Rahma has been given a four-month suspended prison sentence and fined around US\$1,300 by an Israeli military court. The court did at least reject the military prosecution's request to give him a longer, immediately enforceable prison sentence.

Abdallah Abu Rahma received a four-month suspended prison sentence on 23 February, and a fine of about US\$1,300. He will have to serve the sentence if he does anything in the next three years that the authorities deem to involve violence or "obstructing a soldier in the line of duty", an offence of which he was convicted in October 2014 after he stood in front of military bulldozers during a demonstration at the Bitunya checkpoint in the West Bank in May 2012.

When the judge issued the sentence, he noted that Abdallah Abu Rahma had not been convicted of participating in a demonstration. This was in direct contradiction, according to his lawyer, to the court's October 2014 findings. In his explanation of the sentence, the judge concluded that Abdallah Abu Rahma's action had been neither pre-planned nor violent but an act of passive resistance which had not resulted in any substantial harm. The court also acknowledged evidence presented by the defence that in 2010 the European Union had declared Abdallah Abu Rahma a "Human Rights Defender committed to non-violent protest against the route of the Israeli separation barrier through his West Bank village of Bil'in", as well as materials from Amnesty International which argued that he was being prosecuted for exercising his right to peaceful protest.

Abdallah Abu Rahma has long tried to promote the use of peaceful means to raise international awareness about human rights violations suffered by Palestinians due to Israel's fence/wall, much of which has been built in the occupied West Bank. His case illustrates a pattern of the Israeli authorities targeting and harassing those who stand up for their rights using peaceful action in support of Palestinian victims of human rights violations.

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

- Calling on the authorities to drop immediately the suspended prison sentence imposed on Abdallah Abu Rahma and rescind his conviction;
- Calling on them to protect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 APRIL 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. This is the third update of UA 320/14. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/0006/2015/en

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

SUSPENDED SENTENCE FOR ABDALLAH ABU RAHMA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 which is at least 700km long and is built mainly on Palestinian land separating many Palestinian people's homes 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 Israeli authorities' confiscation of their land for its construction.

After Abdallah Abu Rahma was arrested on 10 May 2012 during a demonstration in the West Bank to commemorate the Nakba (the time in 1948 when more than 700,000 Palestinians lost their homes), he was released on bail after a few hours and not summonsed until February 2013, charged with obstructing a soldier. He was convicted on 21 October 2014. In a pre-sentence hearing on 8 February 2015, the Israeli military prosecution acknowledged that Abdallah Abu Rahma's actions were non-violent but said he should go to prison for "many months". They argued that his imprisonment would send a clear message to demonstrators that those who disobey orders from the security forces should expect to go to prison.

The 8 February hearing was attended by diplomats from European Union countries including Finland, France, Spain, Sweden and the UK, as well as a number of Palestinian, international and Israeli activists. After the hearing Abdallah Abu Rahma said, "This is happening because I want freedom and justice, for the security and peace of the Palestinians. All we want is to liberate our land".

In 2010 Abdallah Abu Rahma had been convicted of charges including "incitement" and "organizing and participating in an illegal demonstration". The military judge in that case accepted the prosecution's argument that Abdallah Abu Rahma had encouraged demonstrators in Bil'in to throw stones at Israeli soldiers. The judge's decision 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. Abdallah Abu Rahma was sentenced to 16 months in prison in addition to a six-month suspended sentence.

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 Occupied Palestinian Territories, 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.

Name: Abdallah Abu Rahma

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 320/14 Index: MDE 15/1067/2015 Issue Date: 24 February 2015