

# URGENT ACTION

## MURAD SHTEWI CONVICTED FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST

**An Israeli military court has convicted human rights defender Murad Shtewi of participating in and organizing protests against the closure of the main road to and from his village. The road has been designated for use by residents of nearby Israeli settlements on Palestinian land. He is a prisoner of conscience.**

**Murad Shtewi** was sentenced on 3 December to nine-and-a-half-months' imprisonment and a fine of around US\$2,550; he was also given a suspended sentence that will be invoked if he takes part in any more demonstrations. He has been detained since 29 April, so will just serve a further two months. He has spent the last 12 years campaigning for his village's road to be reopened to Palestinians.

He was convicted at Salem Military Court on charges brought against him in May following his arrest by Israeli forces for organizing and participating in a demonstration that was unauthorized under Military Order 101, which requires permission from an Israeli military commander for all gatherings of 10 or more people "for a political purpose or a matter that could be interpreted as political" and carries a maximum 10-year sentence. He was also charged with causing a public disturbance; a charge of rock-throwing at a protest was dropped during his trial. He was repeatedly denied bail during the trial, which lasted five months though the court sat for only five days.

Since Kufr Qaddum's main road was closed, villagers have been forced to take an alternative route which is about six times longer. The road had been the main connection to the nearest city, Nablus, until nearby settlements were expanded. Murad Shtewi's case is just one of the many that show how the Israeli military uses punitive measures against Palestinian protesters to prevent them from exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly in peaceful protests against restrictions on their movement and confiscation of their land.

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

- Condemning the imprisonment of Murad Shtewi and calling on the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to protect the right to freedom of expression and assembly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by rescinding Military Order 101, which unlawfully restricts these rights.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 DECEMBER 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 first update of UA 137/14. Further information:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/011/2014/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kufr Qadum is a village west of the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank with a population of around 3,500. The Israeli authorities have expropriated most of the village's lands to build and service the illegal settlement bloc of Kedumim. In 2002 during the second Intifada (Palestinian uprising), the Israeli authorities closed off the main road connecting the village to the city of Nablus. This has prevented residents of Kufr Qadum and other Palestinians in surrounding areas from using roads designated for use by Israeli settlers only. Villagers in Kufr Qadum have been holding weekly peaceful demonstrations since 2011 to demand the reopening of the road to Palestinians and to express their opposition to the Israeli military occupation and the expansion of illegal settlements. Israeli forces frequently use unnecessary and excessive force, in breach of international law and standards, against the demonstrators, which has resulted in hundreds of injuries, often serious, to villagers, including children. These include injuries from Israeli forces firing lethal weapons, such as rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition, as well as other less lethal weapons such as tear gas, which Israeli forces use in residential areas and sometimes to target demonstrators as well as journalists. Murad Shtewi has been injured a number of times by Israeli forces using excessive force. On 6 September 2013, a tear gas canister hit him directly, breaking his leg.

Murad Shtewi, a father of three, works at the Palestinian Ministry of Education office in the city of Qalqilya. A leading member of the Palestinian Kufr Qaddum Popular Resistance Committee, he plays a prominent role in the village's weekly demonstration. On arrest, Murad Shtewi was held in Huwara military camp near Nablus and was not questioned until, after three days, his lawyer petitioned a military court for his release. The Israel Security Agency (ISA) only interrogated him briefly, immediately before he was put on trial by a military court on 2 May, at Ofer camp near Ramallah; he was charged with organizing a demonstration without a permit, causing a public disturbance, and throwing rocks during a demonstration.

The court ordered Murad Shtewi's detention to continue until the end of the proceedings on these charges. A petition by his lawyer against this order was heard by the military court of appeals on 18 May and rejected four days later. On the day he was sentenced, Murad Shtewi told local human rights NGO Addameer and Lawyers for Human Rights in the UK that "freedom of movement is a legitimate right guaranteed by all international laws. The peaceful protests are a right as well to demand your rights. I ask the world to increase their solidarity in support of the Palestinian cause to end the occupation, and to shed light on Israeli state terror imposed on children, elderly and women, and the land."

Murad Shtewi's conviction is part of a pattern of harassment by Israeli forces against him and other human rights defenders involved in weekly demonstrations in villages across the West Bank. Murad Shtewi was arrested twice during demonstrations and released without charge. His first arrest took place on 16 March 2012 after an Israeli security forces dog attacked his nephew Ahmad Shtewi during a demonstration. A video shows Murad Shtewi asking soldiers to help his nephew and order the dog to stop attacking him. The Israeli forces sprayed Murad Shtewi in the face with pepper spray and arrested him. He was released without charge after paying bail of around US\$1,500. He was assaulted and arrested again on 20 December 2013 during the demonstration in the village, and was released without charge four days later after paying bail of around US\$1,500.

Name: Murad Shtewi  
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 137/14 Index: MDE 15/038/2014 Issue Date: 18 December 2014