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## **Israeli detention of Palestinian activists must end**

The Israeli authorities must immediately release, or bring before a fair trial, three Palestinian human rights activists detained in Israel following their protests against the construction of the West Bank fence/wall, Amnesty International said today.

In a letter sent to Ehud Barak, Israeli Defence and Deputy Prime Minister on Thursday, Amnesty International expressed concern that Jamal Juma', Abdallah Abu Rahma and Mohammed Othman were prisoners of conscience, held for legitimately voicing their opposition to the fence/wall.

“These men have all been involved in campaigning against the building of this construction, much of it on the land of the occupied West Bank, and we fear that this is the real reason for their imprisonment,” said Malcolm Smart, Director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Programme. “If this is the case they must be released immediately and unconditionally.”

Jamal Juma' is the co-ordinator of the “Stop the Wall” campaign and a prominent human rights activist. He was arrested by the Israeli authorities on 16 December 2009. He has not been formally charged with any offence since his detention and information relating to his arrest has not been shared with his lawyer.

A military court in Israel yesterday extended Jamal Juma's detention for another six days.

Jamal Juma' is being held under military law, which allows him to be tried without charge or trial for interrogation for up to 90 days. As someone who holds a Jerusalem ID card, according to Israeli law his case should be handled under the country's civil, not military, legal system. Since his arrest he has only been permitted limited access to his lawyer.

Abdallah Abu Rahma, head of the “Popular Committee Against the Wall” in the village of Bil'in, was arrested on 10 December 2009. He has been charged with three offences: incitement, stone-throwing, and possession of arms.

Amnesty International understands the possession of arms charge relates to Abdallah Abu Rahma collecting used M16 bullets, and empty sound and gas grenades, employed by Israeli forces to disperse demonstrators against the wall, and exhibiting them in Bil'in museum to raise awareness of Israeli practices against protestors.

Mohammed Othman, a volunteer with the “Stop the Wall” campaign, has been detained continuously since 22 September 2009. He was arrested on his return from Norway, after meeting activist groups there campaigning against the fence/wall and is being held without charge or trial in Israeli administrative detention.

The International Court of Justice ruled in an advisory opinion in 2004 that the construction of the fence/wall on the territory of the occupied West Bank is contrary to international law and should be dismantled. Israel has ignored the ruling.

“These three men are all well known for their defence of the human rights of Palestinians. In the unlikely event that there are genuine grounds to prosecute these men, they should be charged with recognizable criminal offences and brought promptly to trial in full conformity with international fair trial standards,” said Malcolm Smart.