URGENT ACTION

RELEASE PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

Munther Amira, Palestinian human rights defender and social worker, has been arbitrarily detained by Israeli forces since 18 December 2023. On 11 January 2024, an Israeli military court confirmed a four-month administrative detention order against him. Munther Amira's health and wellbeing are at risk while in detention as he requires daily medication for his chronic illnesses. Israeli forces must immediately and unconditionally release him.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Major General Yehuda Fox
Central Command – West Bank
Israel Defence Forces
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Dear Major Genenal Yehuda Fox,

*I am writing to urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Palestinian human rights defender and social worker **Munther Amira** from administrative detention. Pending his release, I also urge you to ensure Munther Amira's access to health care as he requires daily medication for his several chronic illnesses.*

On 18 December 2023, Munther Amira, 53, was brutally arrested from his home in the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem. Israeli soldiers broke into his home, separated him from his wife, Sanaa, and children, handcuffed his children, tore off one of his sons' clothing and severely beat his brother. Amira was initially arrested on allegations that he had published posts inciting to violence on Facebook, but the prosecution failed to offer any credible evidence to charge him and instead issued a four-month administrative detention order against him on 31 December 2023. On 11 January 2024, an Israeli military judge rubber-stamped the order. Designated as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty in 2018, Amira was previously sentenced to six months in prison and five years of probation for participating in peaceful protests. He has also been arrested, threatened, physically assaulted, and targeted on numerous occasions for his human rights work and political activism.

Munther Amira's health and wellbeing are also at risk while in detention as he requires daily medication for high blood pressure and vascular problems.

I therefore urge you to act swiftly to immediately and unconditionally release Munther Amira so that he can return to his family and resume his daily life and much-needed work as a social and community worker; and, pending his release, ensure that he receives adequate medical care and access al all the medication he requires.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Munther Amira, 53, is a Palestinian refugee from the depopulated Palestinian village of Deir Aban, south of Jerusalem, and is currently living in Aida Refugee Camp, in Bethlehem. Amira is a prominent activist and human rights defender, committed to nonviolent popular struggle against Israeli occupation and apartheid. Amira is the director of the Board of the Aida Youth Center, a grassroots community organization that serves the children and youth of the Aida Refugee Camp. He is also a leading activist at the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC), a community-based resistance movement that believes in the power of popular struggle, through various forms, such as civil disobedience, peaceful protests and legal campaigns.

Following his arrest on 18 December, Munther Amira was held at Etzion detention centre where he underwent an interrogation of 45 minutes at most during his first three days of detention, during which he was informed he would be placed under administrative detention. Amira was not given the opportunity to consult with a lawyer before the interrogation, which was focused on Facebook posts and allegations of "incitement to terrorism". Amira denied any connection to the Facebook account attributed to him, and the Israeli military prosecution found no credible or substantial evidence to file charges even based on the posts allegedly attributed to him. While Amnesty International's researchers could not verify the authorship of the Facebook posts in question, they reviewed all posts attributed to Amira and found no incitement to violence or hate in any of them, raising concerns that he is being detained solely for his peaceful activism. Having opted against pressing charges, the Israeli military prosecution issued a four-month administrative detention order against Amira on 31 December 2023, which a military judge rubber-stamped on 11 January 2024.

Under administrative detention, individuals are detained by state authorities without intent to prosecute them in a criminal trial. Each administrative detention order may last for up to six months, but orders can be renewed indefinitely, and evidence is kept secret, meaning that detainees are not able to challenge their detention and do not know when they will be released.

Since 7 October 2023, Israeli authorities have dramatically increased their use of administrative detention against Palestinians, which had already hit a 20-year record high even before 7 October. By the end of 2023, Israel was holding an unprecedented 3,291 Palestinians in administrative detention.

Israel's systematic use of administrative detention violates international human rights law. Its use as such results in arbitrary detention, and if prolonged or repeated can amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. Israel's arbitrary, sweeping and discriminatory use of administrative detention constitutes an inhuman act perpetrated to maintain its system of apartheid against Palestinians.

Munther Amira is currently held at Ofer Military Prison, near Ramallah. During the first 10 days of his detention, he was denied necessary medical care and has not received the required medical attention for his chronic illnesses of high blood pressure and vascular problems. Only following requests submitted by Amira's lawyer and Physicians for Human Rights Israel was he permitted access to some of his medication.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Hebrew, Arabic. You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 14 March 2024
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Munther Amira (he/him)