

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN LAWYER'S DETENTION EXTENDED

French-Palestinian lawyer Salah Hammouri remains held without charge or trial in Israel after suspending his 19-day-long hunger strike in protest at the renewal of his administrative detention. The human rights defender has faced persistent harassment by the Israeli authorities since 2002, including action to revoke his Jerusalem residency status and ongoing administrative detention since March 2022. He spent 15 days in solitary confinement in a dirty, small and windowless cell without contact with the outside world as punishment for going on hunger strike, together with 29 other Palestinian detainees. The Israeli authorities must immediately release Salah Hammouri unless he is promptly charged and ensure that he is allowed to keep his residency status in Jerusalem and continue his human rights work without fear of reprisals.

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

Minister of Defense, Benny Gantz
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Dear Minister,

*I am writing to express grave concern at the punitive arbitrary detention, without charge or trial, and ongoing harassment of French-Palestinian lawyer **Salah Hammouri**. On 7 March 2022 he was arrested and on 10 March 2022, the Military Commander of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in the occupied West Bank issued a three-month administrative order, extending his detention without charge or trial until 6 June 2022 and without any means to effectively challenge the detention. The detention order was renewed twice since then, most recently on 4 September 2022, merely hours before Salah Hammouri's expected release, and is now set to expire on 4 December 2022.*

During this period, on 26 July 2022 the Israeli Prison Services forcibly transferred Salah Hammouri to Hadarim prison after classifying him as a high-risk security prisoner (also known as "Sagav" in Hebrew). The transfer occurred shortly after he wrote an open letter to French President Emmanuel Macron, raising concern that he was being punished for his peaceful activism. On 25 September 2022, Salah Hammouri went on hunger strike together with 29 Palestinian administrative detainees to protest Israel's widespread and systematic use of this cruel and unjust form of detention. As punishment for his hunger strike, on 28 September 2022, he was moved into solitary confinement in a dirty isolation cell measuring only four-square metres, without access to open air or light for 15 days and deprived of any contact with the outside world.

Furthermore, I remain concerned that Salah Hammouri faces a real risk of deportation following Israeli authorities' actions since September 2020 to revoke his permanent residency status, with his administrative detention order being used against him to expedite actions towards his forcible deportation. According to his lawyer, while Salah Hammouri was in solitary confinement, he was pressured by Israeli prison officials, who told him that if he accepted to leave Jerusalem and go to France, he would be released.

I urge you to immediately release Salah Hammouri and all others who have been placed under administrative detention, unless they are promptly charged with an internationally recognizable crime and tried in proceedings that adhere to international fair trial standards. I urge the authorities to ensure that he is allowed to keep his residency status in Jerusalem and continue with his human rights work without fear of reprisals.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Salah Hammouri is a French-Palestinian lawyer who lives in the neighbourhood of Kufr Aqab in East Jerusalem. He holds a Jerusalem residency permit and works as a field researcher for Addameer, a legal aid and prisoners' rights NGO that, together with five other civil society groups, was baselessly declared by the Israeli government a "terrorist organization" in October 2021. UN human rights experts condemned this move as a misuse of counterterrorism measures and a "frontal attack on the Palestinian human rights movement, and on human rights everywhere". The Israeli authorities have persistently harassed and targeted Salah Hammouri. Since 2000, Israeli authorities have detained Salah Hammouri multiple times, including twice when he was placed under administrative detention – for five months in 2004 and for 13 months in 2017 and 2018.

Israeli authorities have also violated his rights to freedom of movement and to family. He is also at risk of forcible deportation as the Israeli authorities have taken action to revoke his Jerusalem residency status. On 3 September 2020, the Israeli Ministry of Interior notified Salah Hammouri of its intention to revoke his permanent residency status on the grounds of "breach of allegiance" to the State of Israel. Salah Hammouri awaits a final ruling by the Israeli High Court, after exhausting the appeals process. According to his lawyer, there is concern that this most recent administrative detention order will be used against him to expedite actions towards his forcible deportation. On 26 July 2022, he was moved to a high-security prison – Hadarim – and was classified as a "high-security risk" prisoner. On 25 September 2022, he joined a mass hunger strike by 30 Palestinian administrative detainees to protest Israel's unjust and cruel practice of administrative detention. He was placed in punitive solitary confinement as a result. He was detained in a dirty and pest-infested isolation cell measuring approximately four-square metres, without access to open air or natural light for 15 days. He was deprived of any contact with the outside world and was under permanent video surveillance during that time. In addition, he faced pressure by Israeli prison officials, who told him that if he accepted to leave his hometown – Jerusalem – and go to France, this detention would end.

In 2021, Salah Hammouri—along with five other Palestinian human rights defenders—was [hacked with Pegasus](#), a spyware developed by Israeli cyber-surveillance company NSO Group.

Under administrative detention, individuals are detained by Israeli state authorities without intent to prosecute them in a criminal trial. Orders can be renewed indefinitely, and evidence is kept secret, meaning that detainees are not able to effectively challenge their detention and do not know when they will be released. From 1 January 2022 until 1 July 2022, hundreds of Palestinians held in administrative detention, including Salah, have boycotted Israeli military courts in protest at their detention without charge or trial.

Evidence collected by Amnesty International and other human rights groups over decades indicates that administrative detention is used as an intentional Israeli policy to detain individuals, including prisoners of conscience held solely for the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association and to punish them for their views and activism challenging the policies of occupation. According to Addameer, as of 10 October 2022, there were around 800 Palestinian administrative detainees, including three Palestinian Legislative Council members, held indefinitely in Israeli prisons without charge or trial. There were two women and six children amongst the total number of those held in administrative detention; the rest were men.

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

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 26 December 2022
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Salah Hammouri (he/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5689/2022/en/>