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## BUILDING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY FOR PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

Presentation for the Conference of the International Arab Forum for  
Supporting Captives in Occupation Prisons

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***“We must mobilize our passive support.”***

- Lubna Masarwa, Palestinian activist and political captive on the Mavi Marmara, June, 2010

**SUMMARY**

International solidarity is an important part of the movement for justice for Palestine. This paper will focus on the issue of support for political prisoners within the greater issue of freedom and justice for Palestine. The important organizations to focus on are human rights, including children’s rights and women’s organizations, many of which have strong international networks and solidarity groups in many countries, which are mainly volunteer, community-based activist organizations working in solidarity with Palestine. International and national government agencies are important but need a high volume of communication before they take notice of this issue.

Past successes, present campaigns and future strategies will be examined and discussed in the context of mobilizing passive support and strengthening campaigns and communication.

**INTRODUCTION**

There are approximately 8000 political prisoners incarcerated by Israel, including 32 women and 264 children. Every day an average of 5 Palestinians are detained in the West Bank by Israeli military.

*“Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories in 1967, over 650,000 Palestinians have been detained by Israel. This forms approximately 20% of the total Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).”* [Palestine Monitor](#) 2009

Building international solidarity for Palestinian political prisoners requires an outreach to many sectors of civil society organizations and national and international governments. We need to be clear and appropriate about what we expect of our supporters and how they can best use their energies.

Some of the groups have specific formats and techniques – like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Other organization websites give only information and no suggested actions.

Solidarity groups have limited energy and resources and need specific appeals to respond effectively. UN and government bodies respond to high volumes of appeals. Some governments, like the European Parliament have committees and commissions that address Palestinian concerns.

Professional organizations that have committees or separate groups that are concerned with human rights, such as physicians, nurses, lawyers, journalists, academics, artists, psychologists etc., can be approached by members of their own profession with a focus chosen to relate to their vocation. This is a community we seldom work with. Groups that are specifically concerned with women and children are an important part of solidarity work.

Worldwide there are many passive and active supporters to be mobilized. Political Prisoners can be the issue that unites many groups in the overall work to free Palestine.

**POLITICAL and LEGAL ACTION**

**What are we asking for?**

When we contact supporters and appeal for action: what are we asking for? The context of political prisoners is the occupation and denial of rights to all citizens of Palestine. The legal process is no exception; there is no concept of a fair trial, Palestinians are invariably found guilty of at least one charge, regardless of evidence or lack of it. Sentences can be long even after Palestinians have been held for long periods before trials; they can be extended without reason. Treatment within captivity includes everything from torture to discomfort to emotional hardship – like the denial of family visits-and prisoners often lack health care and decent living accommodation. Ofer prison is a collection of tents where prisoners must buy food to cook for themselves. The imprisonment of children is against all international conventions. Some women have children in prison.

Are we calling for fair trials and re-trials? Are we asking for the release of all prisoners? Some specific prisoners? Particularly children? Are we demanding humane conditions? Who can give direction in these appeals? The Forum and ex-prisoners can provide leadership and expertise.

Appeals for individual prisoners are best if they are specific. General appeals for legal justice for all prisoners directed to international bodies and governments help raise awareness of prisoners at the level where international action can be taken.

### MORAL and FINANCIAL SUPPORT

#### What is needed?

More than 20 years ago I belonged to The Aid and Defence Fund of South Africa, an international group based in UK; I was on the board of the Canadian branch. We raised funds which were channelled to the lawyers and families of political prisoners. This funding helped to pay legal fees and to support families who were already desperate because wage earners were in prison. It was an important part of supporting the struggle against Apartheid. Certainly Palestinian prisoners need financial aid for legal and home expenses, particularly as so many providers and farmers are imprisoned. Such a specific goal is possible to achieve by organizing dinners, concerts or film showings. Knowing that supporters elsewhere are contributing to their legal and family expenses is an enormous moral boost for prisoners.

For the past 3 years a local Latin America solidarity group to which I belong has been supporting Liliyany Obando, a researcher and human rights activist in Colombia; she was arrested in 2008 while researching assassinations of peasant leaders, on dubious claims that she worked for FARC, a banned organization. Colombia also has 8000 political prisoners. It is often called the Israel of Latin America with its close political and military links to USA and an appalling human rights record. However, Colombia, though an infamous human rights abuser, has 40 million people – ten times more than Palestine – but it is still a dangerous place for those who for justice. Liliyany is the mother of two children and since her detention in 2008 and a long trial still in process since 2009 she has been supported with material aid for her family, legal aid, letters and visits (when possible) and observers at her trial along with ongoing letters to the Colombian government calling for her release. This has helped her be reasonably treated along with 40 other women political prisoners- she was not moved as threatened to a remote and infamous facility. This kind of support can be mobilized for Palestinian prisoners.

#### How do we mobilize support?

This past week I had a visit from three men from North Africa, now Canadian citizens. They were well informed and very sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. Yet I had never met or seen them at any local solidarity event. Other activists say; give them a specific role, so that they feel there is a purpose in activism. We should always have current appeal letters with short text and addresses provided for supporters so they have a specific action. What other ways can we involve them?

It is important that we humanize and personalize our prisoners. Tell their stories, news about their families, quote their words. The global media and opposition to Palestine deliberately dehumanize Palestinians as victims or terrorists. We must humanize them with photos and stories. Palestinian supporters are sometimes heard from, but we rarely hear or see the words of Palestinians themselves– let us remember to quote them and let them speak to the world through our websites, appeals, speeches and conferences.

Young people generally do not join solidarity groups. They often feel alienated and disconnected, but they are the people with computer expertise. Let us involve them in designing and operating websites, list serves, computer generated posters, leaflets and messages. Youth groups can 'adopt' a youth in prison & connect with international activism in their support work.

Letters and appeals should be directed to UN agencies responsible for human rights, media that will cover our issues, even media that don't normally, will respond to massive mailings, members of national parliaments, particularly one's own parliamentary representatives and government leaders. There is an influential group of EU parliamentarians who work for Palestine – we can get their names and contact them; they need to know we support their work. While Benjamin Netanyahu is hardly a 'passive supporter' we should send him (or the Israeli ambassador in our country) copies of all our responses to appeals so our strength is known.

Combining prison support work with films, public events, speakers and meetings with other Palestine issues will attract more passive supporters and stimulate them to act. Have attractive short fact sheets available – with suggested wording and sample letters about prisoners. Hear and read the words of prisoners – give them identity and a voice.

Be creative – have public events with 'stage sets' of prisons, activists reading out letters from prison, large photos of prisoners and details of their work. Street theatre where we pass out action leaflets with our presentations of arrest and incarceration. Involve artists to design banners and posters.

Make specific appeals to women's groups about women prisoners, to children's advocates about children; to professional groups about prisoners of their profession and how they can use their position and education to help.

Take the speakers, films and information to these groups – it is more productive and will reach more new supporters. In North America, Christian churches and trade unions are becoming active in Palestinian solidarity work; contact them in your community with offers of speakers and information.

Even small solidarity groups can 'adopt' a prisoner, contacting their families and lawyers with messages of support while raising funds for family needs, and writing specific appeals for a person who they begin to know through this work and feel a bond of friendship with.

Politicians need reminders that they represent us and we vote- get their party's policy statements and demand they act for the human rights of prisoners – send them the international conventions on legal rights, torture etc. and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – and if your country has signed them – remind them to respect our signature on those documents.

#### **POWER AND POLITICIZATION – OBSTACLES TO JUSTICE**

"While legal accountability for crimes under international law is more of a possibility today than ever before, events in 2009 confirmed that two formidable obstacles stand in the way. These must be addressed if we hope to spread meaningful accountability across the full spectrum of rights. The first is the fact that powerful states continue to stand above the law, outside effective international scrutiny. The other is that powerful states manipulate the law, shielding their allies from scrutiny and pushing for accountability mainly when politically expedient. In so doing, they provide a pretext for other states or block of states to politicize justice in the same way." Claudio Cordone, Amnesty International Secretary-General (interim) 2010. From: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

**CONCLUSION**

*“ACTION IS THE MOTHER OF HOPE”..... Pablo Neruda*

There is always more we can do. There is no lack of information and material. What we need is an international network of Palestinian political prisoner support groups. The internet is an essential tool for spreading information and getting out action appeals quickly and widely. List serves and websites can connect us to each other as we share our support and actions.

But just as we need to humanize prisoners –put a life and face to each of them – to become a sister or brother to each of them - we shall work more effectively because as we learn from other participants at this conference we will be able to put a face to that person when we communicate with a friend in activism. Ex-prisoners have an important leadership role to globalize prisoner solidarity. Who better than them knows what best needs to be done?

The detention, arrest, imprisonment and torture of political prisoners are also all global strategies to incapacitate activists and to frighten those who are part of resistance to oppression. This strategy is practiced around the world from Afghanistan to Guantanamo Bay. If injustice is globalized by the USA, Israel and its allies, including Canada- then we must globalize resistance.

Globalized resistance to the systematic dehumanization of Palestinian prisoners can be the unifying catalyst for disparate groups – human rights, children’s advocates, women’s organizations, solidarity groups, Palestinian activists in the diaspora, ex-prisoners, youth organizations, and professional groups from architects and agriculturists to lawyers and athletes - to come together to mobilize support for the injustice inflicted on Palestinian prisoners and Palestine as a whole. Finally we need that wonderful quality of our Palestinian sisters and brothers, *SUMOUD*, to persist as they do in the struggle to free all political prisoners and to free Palestine. *Shukran*

## APPENDIX I

## SPECIFIC RESOURCES FOR SOLIDARITY WITH POLITICAL PRISONERS

**Websites**

<http://www.addameer.org> Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association  
[www.palestinemonitor.org](http://www.palestinemonitor.org) Exposing life under the occupation  
[www.palestinechronicle.com](http://www.palestinechronicle.com) Global Voices for a Better World  
[www.electronicintifada.com](http://www.electronicintifada.com) news from the Palestinian perspective  
<http://www.btselem.org> The Israeli Information Center for Human rights in the Occupied Territory  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) International Human Rights organization  
<http://www2.ohchr.org> Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  
<http://www.alternativenews.org/> an independent source of news from Beit Sahour & Jerusalem  
[www.bilin-village.org](http://www.bilin-village.org) from the centre of non-violent resistance in Palestine  
<http://www.hrw.org/en/home> Global human rights watch organization  
<http://www.dci-pal.org/english/camp/freedom/pdf/prison.pdf> children in Israeli prisons  
<http://www.middleeastmonitor.org.uk/news/middle-east/> UK news from a Palestinian perspective  
<http://www.dci-pal.org/> Defense for Children International organization, based in Palestine  
<http://www.aseerat.ps/en-index.php> "Protection of Palestinian Female Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons" project  
[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/) The Committee Against Torture (CAT) is the body of 10 independent experts that monitors that reports to the United Nations General Assembly.  
<http://www.wilpfinternational.org/> International Women's organization based in Geneva  
<http://iwps.info> Inter. Women's Peace Service human rights volunteers, based in Deir Istiya, West Bank.

**Books**

**Nashif, Esmail**, Palestinian political prisoners: Identity and community. New York: Routledge, 2008.

## APPENDIX II

## GENERAL REFERENCES &amp; RESOURCES FOR PALESTINE

Books

- Abunimah, Ali**. ONE COUNTRY: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse. 2006. Metropolitan Books. USA
- Adonis, Mahmoud Darwish & Samih al-Qasim**. VICTIMS OF A MAP: A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry Saqi Books London, UK
- Amiry, Suad**. SHARON & MY-MOTHER-IN-LAW. Granata. London, UK.
- Arab Group for the Protection of Nature**. SIXTY ONE PORTRATS TO THE RYTHM OF HATIKIVA: Some of the Israeli Massacres in Palestine. Illustrated by Marwa Al-Najjar. Introduction by Razan Zuayter. 2009. www.apnature.org Amman, Jordan.
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- Baroud, Ramzy**. MY FATHER WAS A FREEDOM FIGHTER: GAZA'S UNTOLD STORY. 2010. Pluto Press, London, UK
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- Bassam Abu Sharif**. ARAFAT & THE DREAM OF PALESTINE. 2009 Palgrave MacMillan. UK
- Boullata, Kamal**. PALESTINIAN ART. 2009. Saqi. London, UK
- Brooks, Robert & Rana Abu Ghazaleh, Rassem Khamaisi, Rami Nasrallah & others**. 3 reports including: THE WALL OF ANNEXATION AND EXPANSION: Its Impact on the Jerusalem Area 2005; THE WALL: Fragmenting the Palestinian Fabric in Jerusalem 2007 and JERUSALEM WALL: A decade of Division and Urban Incarceration 2009. The International Peace and Cooperation Center. Jerusalem. www.ipcc-jerusalem.org
- Carter, Laurel Anne**. THE SHEPHERD'S GRANDDAUGHTER Groundwood Books. 2008 Toronto
- Cook, Jonathan**. BLOOD AND RELIGION: THE UNMASKING OF THE JEWISH AND DEMOCRATIC STATE. Pluto Press, 2006. London, UK
- Cook, Jonathan**. DISAPPEARING PALESTINE: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair. 2008. Zed Books UK
- Cox, Rebecca A.**, editor. WEST BANK: A COLLECTION OF GRAPHIC NOVELS. 2010. Project Hope. www.Projecthope.ca Canada & Palestine.
- Cortas, Wadad Makdisi**. A WORLD I LOVED. 2009. NATION BOOKS, NY, USA
- Engler, Yves**. CANADA AND ISRAEL: BUILDING APARTHEID 2010. RED Publishing, B.C. and Fernwood Publishing, N.S. Canada
- Halper, Jeff**. AN ISRAELI IN PALESTINE: Resisting Dispossession, Redeeming Israel. 2008. Pluto, UK
- Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA)** STEADFAST HOPE: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace (with excellent DVD included. 2009. www.IsraelPalestineMissionNetwork.org
- Jayyusi, Salma**, ed. ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN PALESTINIAN LITERATURE. 1992. Colombia University Press. USA
- Kanafani, Laila G.**, editor. LIKE ROSES IN THE WIND. Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon. 2005
- Karmi, Ghada**. IN SEARCH OF FATIMA: A Palestinian Story. 2002. Verso. London, UK
- Kawar, Widad Kamel**. BETHLEHEM From Golden Threads To Cement Blocks. Jordan www.arabheritage.org
- Kovel, Joel** OVERCOMING ZIONISM: Creating a Single Democratic State in Israel/Palestine. 2007. Pluto Press, UK
- Mast, Edward & Hathem El-Zabri**. NAKBA: The Ongoing Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine www.60yearsofnakba.org 2008. USA
- Nusseibeh, Hazem Zaki** JERUSALEMITES: A Living Memory. 2009. Rimal Publications, Nicosia, Cyprus, & Melisende Publishing, London, UK
- Pappe, Ilan** THE ETHNIC CLEANSING OF PALESTINE 2007 Oneworld, Oxford UK
- Parry, William** AGAINST THE WALL: The Art of Resistance in Palestine 2010 Pluto Press, UK
- Pilger, John** FREEDOM NEXT TIME 2007. A Black Swan Book. Transworld Publishers, UK
- Sacco, Joe**. FOOTNOTES IN GAZA 2009. Metropolitan Books. Henry Holt and Company. New York, USA
- Sacco, Joe**. PALESTINE Fantagraphics Books. Seattle, USA

**Shahin, Miriam.** PALESTINE –A GUIDE. With photography by George Azar. 2006. Interlink Books, USA  
**Shammout, Ismail & Tamam** PALESTINE: THE EXODUS AND THE ODYSSEY 2001. National Press. Jordan  
**Shehadeh, Raja** PALESTINE WALKS: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape. 2008. Profile Books. London, UK.  
**Soueif, Ahdaf** MEZZATERRA: Fragments from the Common Ground.2004. Anchor Books, USA  
**White, Ben.** ISRAEL’S APARTHEID: A Beginner’s Guide 2009. Pluto Press. UK  
**Wiles, Rick** BEHIND THE WALL: Life, Love, and Struggle in Palestine 2010, Potamac Books, USA

### Journals

**CANADIAN DIMENSION**, Sept. 07, Sept. 08, March 09, August 09 Winnipeg, CA.  
**HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES**. Summer 2009. Ottawa, CA  
**NEW INTERNATIONALIST**, UK & CA. Aug. 05, May 07, Aug 07, Oct. 07 May 09.

### Websites

**[www.addameer.org](http://www.addameer.org)** Addameer Prisoners’ Support and Human Rights  
**[www.apnature.org](http://www.apnature.org)** Arab Group for the Protection of Nature  
**[www.bbcf.ca](http://www.bbcf.ca)** Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation has more articles, action suggestions  
 & reviews of many of the books & films listed  
**[www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net)** Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions  
**[www.bilin-village.org/](http://www.bilin-village.org/)** The site for Bil’in village, Palestine  
**[www.caf.ca](http://www.caf.ca)** Canadian Arab Federation  
**[www.coat.ncf.ca](http://www.coat.ncf.ca)** Research on Canada’s military sales & investments  
**[www.canpalnet.ca](http://www.canpalnet.ca)** Canada Palestine Support Network:  
**[www.electronicintifada.net](http://www.electronicintifada.net)** good news & analysis  
**[www.icahd.org](http://www.icahd.org)** Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions  
**[www.ifamericaknew.org](http://www.ifamericaknew.org)** what mainstream media misses & omits on Middle East  
**<http://ilanpappe.com>** website of the Israeli historian  
**[www.iwps.info](http://www.iwps.info)** International Women’s Peace Service  
**[www.najjalali.com](http://www.najjalali.com)** Palestinian cartoonist  
**[www.necef.org/](http://www.necef.org/)** Near East Cultural & Education group in Canada  
**<http://www.palestinecampaign.org>**  
**[www.palestinechronicle.com](http://www.palestinechronicle.com)** good news source  
**[www.palestinaprisoners.blogspot.com](http://www.palestinaprisoners.blogspot.com)** updates on Palestinian political prisoners  
**[www.stopthewall.org](http://www.stopthewall.org)** Stop the Wall Campaign

### Films

**THE IRON WALL** - Director, Mohammed Alatar. [www.TheIronWall.ps](http://www.TheIronWall.ps)  
**JERUSALEM: The East Side Story** Director, Mohammed Alatar. [www.eastsidestory.ps](http://www.eastsidestory.ps)  
**OCCUPATION 101: voices of the silent majority** Directors, Sufyan Omeish & Abdullah Omeish.  
 Triple Eye Film Production. [www.occupation101.com](http://www.occupation101.com)

## Appendix III

## PRISON STORIES FROM PALESTINIANS



**Adeb Abu Rahmah**, a leader from Bil'in, was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment, for his involvement in organizing demonstrations. Having served his sentence in full, Abu Rahmah, who was arrested on July 10th, 2009, was supposed to be released immediately according to the decision. The prosecution, which hoped for an even harsher sentence, filed an appeal in the Military Court of Appeals, asking that Abu Rahmah remains incarcerated despite having served his sentence. From [www.bilin-org](http://www.bilin-org) On Nov. 23, 2010 at 2:30am Israeli forces stormed the village of Bil'in in a night raid. Four soldiers raided the home of Adeb Abu Rahma, one of the prominent organizers of the non-violent demonstrations against the Wall. Adeb Abu Rahma has been imprisoned by Israel for the last 17 months. This night, Israeli forces arrested **Mohammed Adeb Abu Rahma, Adeb's son**, who is under 16 years old. It is unknown where he was taken. Mohammed is Adeb's only son & sole family provider.



Photo upper left: Adeb in court

Photo lower left: Soldiers escorting the bound and blindfolded Mohammed into a military jeep.

Photos from [www.josephdana.com](http://www.josephdana.com)

Adeb Abu Rahmah's family are looking for a volunteer to help them make a "Free Adeb" website. Adeb has been imprisoned since his arrest from a nonviolent demonstration on 10/7/2009. The help needed would involve making the site and uploading videos and pictures of Adeb in action. If you can help, please contact Adeb's daughter: [rajaaburahmeh\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:rajaaburahmeh(at)yahoo.com)

**Lubna Masarwa** " During the Israeli attack on the Mavi Marmara, deep in international waters, I was inside the body of the ship... We were going to Gaza to break the siege that Israel has imposed on a million-and-a-half people for the last four years... We were full of hope. When the attack began at 4:am on 31 May 2010, our ship was transformed into a military target... As soon as the Israeli occupation forces learned that I was a Palestinian Israeli citizen, I was treated more harshly and isolated from the rest of the other imprisoned passengers. I was taken to a prison in Ashkelon where I was held in isolation and subjected to humiliations such as strip searches four times a day. The next day we were brought to court, and I was held in a small metal box inside the police car for eight hours with my hands and legs shackled. We were subjected to various accusations, from attacking soldiers to carrying weapons. The judge gave the police permission to extend our detention for another eight days. After international pressure forced the Israeli authorities to release all the foreign prisoners, all the Palestinian citizens of Israel were taken to court again. This time, the judge ruled that we would be subject to house arrest and would be forbidden to leave the country for 45 days...As an occupier and a colonizer, Israel depends on the principle of "divide and conquer" in order to maintain its control. It is especially threatened by people like the Palestinian delegation from 1948 (what is now referred to as Israel) who sailed to Gaza on the Mavi Marmara, because we defy Israel's attempt to divide us as Palestinians." from [www.electronicintifada.net](http://www.electronicintifada.net)



Photo: T. Wolfwood

And from a speech in Stuttgart, in November, 2010, she said, "we are struggling as Palestinians, we are tired and we want you to do more..it is urgent and the world keeps letting Israel commit massacres and continue its ethnic cleansing practices..why...enough is enough..we are fed up.."

**Sahar Francis** *"I am a Palestinian and I'm working in a Palestinian NGO called Addameer for political prisoners and human rights based in the Ramallah. And I wanted to discuss issue of the Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli prisons and occupation. These are stories of thousands of Palestinian detainees that they are held in the Israeli prisons... I'm here to highlight the, the fact that Israelis since the beginning of the occupation, actually, in 1967, are using the issue of the imprisonment, detention, interrogation, torturing, sentencing as a policy against the Palestinian people and it should be connected with the whole aspects of the, occupation. We estimate that since the beginning of the occupation till now, the Israelis arrested more than 750,000 Palestinians, ah, through these years... 900 detainees from Gaza area that are banned from family visits since almost two years. They have no, direct contact with their families at all, including phone calls. They cannot call their families. And we have around 550 administrative detainees, detainees that are held without any charges, without any trials."* Excerpts from speech of Sahar Francis to the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict Public hearings, Geneva, Morning Session of 7 July 2009



**Ameer Makhoul**, a Palestinian social and rights activist in Israel, recently on trial and jailed after accepting lesser charges in a plea bargain. According to official Israeli statistics, the percentage of convicted defendants in criminal cases in Israel ranges between 96% and 99% of the cases...A closer study of the Israeli statistics shows that the percentage of convicted Arab citizens of the state of Israel in criminal courts is much higher than that of Jewish citizens. ..in a report prepared by the Information and Research Center of the Israeli Knesset to the parliamentary Law, Constitution and Judiciary Committee, according to which *"the percentage of convicted Arabs is much higher than that of Jews in all cases of criminal background and others....is the reason why most defendants in criminal cases prefer to sign a plea bargain with the prosecutor."* From: [www.alternativenews.org](http://www.alternativenews.org)



*"... As I write you from Israeli prison, I permit myself to send greetings from this sector of the Palestinian people, that represents the entire Palestinian society - that of the prisoners of freedom in the prisons of occupation and apartheid. These 8,000 prisoners are in their homeland. Yet, at the same time, they are barred from this land. However, no matter how hard the walls of the prison may be, they will not stand between them and their right to have a nation. It's important that you know that these 8,000 prisoners are not a just statistic or a number, but each and every one of them has a name, a dream, a father, brother, sister, son or daughter. Each has his or her own suffering, notwithstanding the collective one, and that of their families who endure the great and exhausting suffering of seeing their children on the other side of the wall. I don't speak of that famous apartheid wall that we all know - this wall is less famous, for it is made of glass and prevents the Arab and Palestinian prisoners from touching their parents, allowing them to talk to their families only once every two weeks, for 45 minutes, through the phone receiver and the humiliation behind the glass barrier. These prisoners are prohibited not only from freedom, but also from their families, Arabic newspapers, and all but a few*

*books... There is an Israeli prisoner in Gaza, a soldier of the occupation and the forces of murder. The whole world knows his name and age, and feels the pain of his family. There is nothing wrong with that, of course. But where is the international community when it comes to the 8,000 Palestinian prisoners who are imprisoned for their struggle and human dignity, and the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian prisoners who were forced into Israeli prisons in the past? Do they not have a story too?"* photo from: [www.alternativenews.org](http://www.alternativenews.org)

*"The lighthouse, al-fanar in Arabic, is an inspiration. I have built a lighthouse here in jail. It has been built in my mind because I am not allowed to use the space, but my mind is totally mine. Al-fanar became part of my vision and dream for freedom and human dignity. The lighthouse is out of prison, while the role of the anchor is to be rooted and safe. In fact, I need both -- al-fanar to give direction to my vision, while the role of the anchor is to understand where I currently am. I need to be balanced and realistic to act within a totally unbalanced reality."* [www.electronicintifada](http://www.electronicintifada) Nov. 29, 2010  
Makhoul Ameer writing in prison



**Abdallah Abu Rahmah** is one of the organizers of the 5 years of non-violent resistance in Bil'in against the wall and loss of land. December 10, 2010 (Human Rights Day) will be the 1st anniversary of Abdallah's imprisonment. He was taken from his bed in the early hours of the morning and has been held ever since in Ofer military prison in Israel – an enclosure of tents with few facilities where prisoners must pay to get food to prepare for themselves.

A school teacher and farmer (his family have sold the farm to support him and themselves) Abdallah's non-violent activism in Bil'in is the sole reason for his arrest. He is jail with Adeb Abu Rahmah. On 10 December 2008, exactly a year before his arrest, Abdallah received the Carl Von Ossietzky Medal for Outstanding Service in the Realization of Basic Human Rights, awarded by the International League for Human Rights in Berlin.

On October 11, 2010, Abdallah Abu Rahmah was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, for his involvement in his village's unarmed struggle against the wall. He was also sentenced to 6 months suspended sentence for 3 years and a fine of 5,000 NIS. In the sentencing, the judge cited the non-implementation of an Israeli High Court ruling which declared the current route of the wall on Bil'in's land illegal as a mitigating factor. The military prosecution is likely to appeal this sentencing – as they did in the case of Adeb Abu Rahmah, who was also sentenced for 12 months on similar charges but is still in prison after 15 months, pending the decision about the prosecution's appeal.

He writes, *"it is the support that I receive from my family and friends that helps me go on. ..The relationship we have built together with activists has gone beyond the definition of colleague, we are brothers and visitors in the struggle...From the confines of my imprisonment it becomes so clear that our struggle is far bigger than justice for only Bil'in or even Palestine. We are engaged in an international fight against oppression."* Letter from Ofer Military Detention Camp from Bil'in conference documents.

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**Appendix IV**

**From a poem by Suheir Hammad, reprinted in documents of Bil'n 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, April 2010**

**Occupation, curfew, settlements, closed military zone, administrative detention, siege, preventive strike, terrorist infrastructure, transfer. Their war destroys language. Speak genocide with the words of a quiet technician**

**Occupation means that you cannot trust the OPEN SKY, or any open street near to the gates of Sniper tower. It means you cannot trust the future or have faith that the past will always be there.**

**Occupation means you live out your life under military rule, and the constant threat of death, a quick death from a sniper's bullet or a rocket attack from an M16.**

**A crushing, suffocating death, a slow bleeding death in an ambulance stopped for hours at a checkpoint. A dark death at a torture table of an Israeli prison: just a random arbitrary death.**

**A cold calculated death: from a curable disease. A thousand small deaths while you watch your family dying around you.**

**Occupation means that every day you die, and the world watches in silence. As if your death was nothing, as if you were a stone falling in the earth, water falling over water.**

**And if you face all of this death and indifference and keep your humanity, and your love and your dignity and you refuse to surrender to their terror, then you something of the courage... that is: PALESTINE**

## Appendix V

**We are still here**

Last night we went to the seashore  
My father carried my little brother  
He cries a lot and hardly moves.  
Mother held the baby  
My older brother and I carried blankets  
They aren't heavy, we only have a few.

Nights in Gaza are cold  
We wear all our clothes and snuggle together.  
Our house has no walls or roof  
So we are accustomed now to lie  
under the dark sky.  
When we are hungry mother says  
Count stars and we do until we sleep.

We reached the beach slowly  
The stones hurt my feet because  
my shoes have stone-size holes.  
I don't cry because Mother says  
I am eight now a big girl.  
Little brother cries for all of us.

Father hardly ever talks  
He walks all night holding my sick brother  
This night we wanted to stay awake  
under our blankets we waited  
lying on a patch of pebbles and sand

The sea so quiet we could hear  
the murmurs of hundreds of people.  
We were told ships were coming with medicine  
and cement to rebuild our house.  
We try everyday to pile up broken blocks  
Even I can carry small bits  
But they don't stay together very well.

We waited happy to know help was coming.  
Father has a little job in the day  
He used to be a teacher but the school has gone.  
He sells cigarettes beside the road  
I did sleep until my mother shook me.  
The stars had left the sky  
We go home now she said  
The ships won't come they were captured.

We bought a fish from a fisherman  
to cook at home for breakfast  
As the sun came up I stumbled along.  
Father said nothing but I want to say  
Please tell your friends  
We are still here  
in Gaza.

Theresa Wolfwood June, 2010

## مازلنا هنا

الليلة الماضية ذهبنا الى الشاطئ  
حمل و الذي أخي الصغير  
الذي كان يبكي بشدة ولا يكاد يتحرك  
امي حملت الرضيع  
و في حين حملت و اخي البطانيات  
لم يزنوا الكثير فهم قليل و ليالي غزة قارسة البرودة فنحتمي بعضنا ببعض وقد لبسنا كل ما لدينا  
منزلنا ليس له جدار أو سقف  
وقد اعتدنا على النوم تحت السماء المظلمة  
وعندما نجوع تقول لنا أمي أن نعد النجوم  
في السماء الى أن يغلبنا النوم  
وصلنا للشاطئ ببطئ و أنا أتألم من الحصى الذي يخترق الثقوب في حذائي.  
ولكني لا أبكي لأن أمي تقول أنني في الثامنة من عمري وما عدت طفلة و لنترك أخي الصغير يبكي نيابة عنا كلنا.  
قلما يتحدث أبي ويكتفي بحمل أخي الصغير  
الليلة أردنا أن لا ننام فانتظرنا تحت اللحاف مستلقون على حصى الشاطئ ومن هدوء البحر استمعنا لهمسات الناس.  
فقد اعلمونا أن السفن قادمة بالدواء و بالاسمنت لبناء منازلنا فقد كنا نجمع الحجار كل يوم حتى أنا حملت الحجارة و لكنها  
تعود فتنهدهد  
انتظرنا بسرور للعون القادم لنا أبي لا يكاد يعمل بالنهار فقد كان معلماً قبل أن تختفي المدرسة أصبح يبيع السجائر على  
الطرق  
استسلمت للنوم قليلاً قبل أن تهزني أمي فقد غابت النجوم  
منعت السفن فلنعد للمنزل، لقد صدوها فهي غير آتية.  
اشترينا سمكة من الصياد لنفطر عليها في المنزل و عندما أشرقت الشمس قضيت وقتي عبثاً لم يقل والدي شيئاً و لكنني  
أتوقف لأقول  
قولوا لرفاقكم  
نحن ما زلنا هنا – في غزة.

تريسا ولفود

Translated by Jenna, aged 10 years

**BUILDING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY FOR  
PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**  
page 14 Appendix VI  
Women Political Prisoners April, 2010



Name			
Amna Jawad Ali Muna	19/1/2001	Life sentence	Damon
Abeer Essa Atef Amru	22/2/2001	20 years	Damon
Eman Muhammad Hassan Ghazawi	3/8/2001	13 years and 2 months	Damon
Ahlam Aref Shahada At-Tamimi	14/9/2001	16 Life sentences, 20 years and 6 months	Hasharon
Ibtisam Abd Al-Hafid Faiz Issawi	4 /11/2001	15 years	Damon
Lina Ahmad Saleh Jarbuni	18/4/2002	17 years	Hasharon
Sana' Muhammad Hussein Shehada	24/5/2002	Life sentence	Hasharon
Qahira Saeed As-Saadi	30/5/2002	3 Life sentences	Hasharon
Ireena Buli Shuk Sarahna	22/5/2002	20 years	Hasharon
Dua'a Ziad Jameel Al-Jayyousi	7/6/2002	3 Life sentences and 32 years	Damon
Warda Abbas Abdelfattah Bakrawi	16/10/2002	8 years	Hasharon
Latifa Muhammad Mahmoud Abu Dira'	8/12/2003	24 years	Hasharon
Amal Fayeze Jum'a Jum'a	9/5/2004	12 years	Damon
Reema Riyad Hassan Abd Ar-Razak Daraghmah	28/7/2004	25 years	Hasharon
Mariam Salem Suleiman Tarabeen	24/1/2005	8 years	Hasharon
Waf a' Sameer Albis	20/6/2005	12 years	Damon
Fotna Mustafa Khalil Abu Al Aish	21/7/2006	15 years	Damon
Wurud Maher Qaseem Qaseem	4/10/2006	6 years	Damon
Rawda Ibrahim Yunis Habib	20/5/2007	Detained	Hasharon
Nada Ata Saleh Derbas	5/5/2007	6 years	Damon
Fatin Bassam Shafi' Saadi	20/5/2008	4 years	Damon
Sanabeel Nabigh Youssef Brik	22/9/2008	Detained	Hasharon
Khadija Habash	22/01/2009	3 years	Hasharon
Raja' Al-Ghoul	30/03/2009	Administrative Detainee (order expires on 29 March 2010)	Hasharon
Randa Shehateet	6/01/2009	50 months	Hasharon
Aisha Mohammad Abayat	13/08/2009	Detained	Hasharon
Abeer Mohammad Hassan Odeh	09/07/2009	Detained	Hasharon
Nesreen Abu Zeineh	18/08/2009	Detained	Damon
Ghufran Zamil	29/08/2009	Detained	Hasharon
Suad Ahmad Abd Ar-Raouf Nazzal	22/08/2009	Detained	Damon
Hana Yahya Saber Shalabi	14/09/2009	Administrative detention	Hasharon
Sumoud Yasser Hassan Karajeh	15/10/2009	Detained	Hasharon
Nili Zahi As'ad Sa'id	11/11/2009	Detained	Hasharon