



**PALESTINE  
SOLIDARITY  
CAMPAIGN**

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Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP  
Foreign Secretary  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London  
SW1A 2AH

31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to ask you to take immediate action to secure the release by the Israeli authorities of Mahmoud Nawajaa.

Mahmoud Nawajaa is the General coordinator of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC). BNC is the largest coalition in Palestinian civil society, and leads the global, peaceful Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement for freedom, justice and equality

On 30th July, at 3:30 am, Israeli occupation forces [arrested](#) Mr Nawajaa, from his home near Ramallah in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT). They stormed his house, blindfolded and handcuffed him, taking him away from his wife and three young children.

Mahmoud's arrest comes at a time when Palestinian civil society is calling for [effective accountability measures](#) by the international community, including the UK Government, to prevent Israel's planned *de jure* annexation of 30% of the occupied West Bank, including illegal Israeli settlements and parts of the Jordan Valley, and [stop Israel's ongoing de facto annexation and apartheid](#).

On the day of his arrest, Nawajaa, who is a resident of the occupied West Bank, was forcibly transferred to the Jalameh prison, in Israel, where he is currently being detained. This transfer constitutes an act of [unlawful deportation](#), a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention (Articles 49 and 147), and a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 8).

Mahmoud Nawajaa is far from being the only Palestinian subjected to the Israeli authorities' arbitrary arrest, detention and imprisonment. For alleged offenses against its "security," Israel currently holds in its jails approximately 4,700 Palestinians, including children, hundreds of whom are under administrative detention, without charges. In the face of the COVID crisis, Israeli authorities have disregarded the [call](#) of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on all governments to release "every person detained without sufficient legal basis," including political prisoners and others detained simply for expressing critical or dissenting views.



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As a leading BDS activist, Mahmoud Nawajaa is without doubt a human rights defender as defined in the EU Guidelines: Mahmoud has been promoting universally recognised human rights, in particular the rights to self-determination, non-discrimination and equality, as well as the right to return to one's country, by [strictly nonviolent, anti-racist](#) BDS campaigning.

Israel's arrests of human rights defenders, like Mahmoud, is to a large extent a result of the failure of world powers including successive UK governments, to apply the effective accountability measures they have at their disposal to end Israel's impunity and ensure its respect of IHL and Palestinian human rights.

We therefore urge the UK government to act pursuant to its commitments under the 'UK Support for Human Rights Defenders', published last year. We also ask the UK to work with European counterparts to examine this serious matter under the framework of the EU Guidelines.

In light of the above, **we strongly urge the UK Government to:**

- 1. take all actions at its disposal to ensure Israel's immediate release of Palestinian human rights defender Mahmoud Nawajaa.**
- 2. publicly condemn Israel for its policy of harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders who, like Mahmoud, are subject to arbitrary arrest and detention for their active defence of the human rights of the Palestinian people.**

Yours Sincerely

Professor Kamel Hawwash, Chair PSC  
Ben Jamal, Director PSC