



International Solidarity Movement Czech Republic Group
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Prague, 14th of January 2016

Mr. Petkov, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in the Czech Republic
Mr. Mitov, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria
Ms. Zaharieva, Justice Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria

Deep concern about the case of Omar Nayef Zayed

Dear Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria Mr. Petkov; Foreign Minister Mr. Daniel Mitov and Justice Minister Ms. Ekaterina Zaharieva;

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, are addressing you today with deep concern about the case of Omar Nayef Zayed, a former Palestinian political prisoner, husband, father and community member, currently facing extradition from Bulgaria to Israel.

Omar Nayef Zayed has lived an exemplary life in Bulgaria with his Bulgarian wife and children for the past 22 years. He came to Bulgaria after escaping unjust political imprisonment as a Palestinian living under Israeli occupation. Omar was convicted in an Israeli military court, which are courts in name only meeting no standard of legal and fair trials, courts based on "evidence" obtained through torture, and secret evidence, and as a result convict over 99 percent of the Palestinians who appear before them.

After 22 years of life in Bulgaria, Israel is seeking Zayed's extradition under the European Convention on Extradition, which explicitly excludes "political offenses." Zayed's case - like that of all Palestinians under occupation imprisoned by the Israeli state - is a political case; his imprisonment was a political matter. Indeed, most of Palestinians imprisoned before 1993 have been released, not because of the end of their sentences, but because of the political process –

negotiations and exchange agreements - between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the state of Israel. The fact that Palestinians' imprisonment is consistently the subject of political negotiations and agreements further underlines the political nature of Omar Nayef Zayed's imprisonment.

Palestinians arrested by Israel frequently face torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment; they are consistently denied family visits; and their convictions have come at the hands of military courts that rubber-stamp the demands of the Israeli military occupying Palestine. Bulgaria's own recognition of Palestine's statehood since 1988 indicates that Bulgaria rejects the Israeli occupation and supports Palestinian self-determination. Therefore, Bulgaria should not act as a facilitator of the arrest and imprisonment of Palestinian political prisoners, and should instead take responsibility to protect Omar Nayef Zayed from further torture, abuse and unjust imprisonment.

We urge you to reject the extradition request from Israel for Omar Nayef Zayed and cancel any and all warrants for Zayed's arrest, imprisonment or extradition, and instead allow him to remain and continue his life with his family.

Regards,

Petra Šťastná, International Solidarity Movement Czech Republic Group
Moein Shomali, Palestinian Club in the Czech Republic
Mohammad Al Asmar, Islamic Foundation, Czech Republic
Alaa Kassab, Friends of Palestine, Czech Republic
Zdeněk Jehlička, Initiative For a Just Peace in the Middle East, Czech Republic
Jana Ridvanová, Initiative For a Just Peace in the Middle East, Czech Republic
Salah Abu Amsha, Initiative For a Just Peace in the Middle East, Czech Republic
Nikola Čuřík, Left Perspective, Czech Republic