

26 August 2020

Dear Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh;

We write to you today with utmost concern regarding the ongoing political detention and repression of journalists, artists and anti-corruption activists by the Palestinian Authority, especially as the PA continues security coordination with Israel despite its repeated verbal pledges to bring such coordination to an end. In particular, we write to urge the immediate release of Palestinian media professional and director Abdel-Rahman Daher, detained by the Preventive Security Service in Nablus, occupied Palestine.

Abdel-Rahman Daher's arrest and ongoing interrogation has been justified on the basis of making critical comments about the Palestinian Authority, instances of corruption, and the performance of the government which you represent. He has been detained since 17 August on the basis of nothing more than expressing his political and social opinions, a right guaranteed to Palestinian citizens under the Palestinian Authority's own Basic Law. Palestinians are constantly under threat for posting on social media and speaking out by the Israeli occupation; they also face this threat concurrently from the PA, as illustrated by this case.

Even the allegations against Daher amount to nothing more than the expression of opinion by a Palestinian, a right upheld not only by Palestinian law but by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This case appears to be the latest example – following on the so-called “cybercrime” prosecutions and numerous political detentions by PA security forces – of political repression of Palestinian activists challenging corruption and misconduct, rather than investigating those responsible for corruption and misconduct. It must also be noted that those accused of corruption and misconduct are often the same figures involved in normalization with the Israeli occupation and advancing security coordination with Israel.

This repression directed against Palestinian journalists, media workers and activists serves only to advance impunity for corruption and further weaken Palestinians' ability to stand together to confront Israeli occupation, colonization and apartheid. In fact, PA jails have far too often been a “revolving door” with Israeli prisons, with the same honest voices targeted for repression.

Once again, we urge that you live up to your commitments under Palestinian and international law to protect freedom of expression and association, end the political persecution of anti-corruption activists and immediately secure the release of Abdel-Rahman Daher and all political detainees in PA prisons.

With regards,

Charlotte Kates  
International Coordinator, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network