



The Case of Omar Nayef Zayed

Former Palestinian Prisoner facing Extradition from Europe, Struggling for Justice

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The Case of Omar Nayef Zayed: Overview of Key Points

- **Omar Nayef Zayed, 52, is a former Palestinian political prisoner. He has lived in Bulgaria for 22 years; he is married to a Bulgarian woman, has raised three Bulgarian children, runs a grocery store and is a respected member of Sofia's Palestinian community.**
- **Today, he is threatened with imprisonment once again - with arrest and extradition to Israel, the reimposition of his sentence, torture and isolation.**
- Born in Jenin, in Palestine's West Bank, he was arrested in 1986 and sentenced to life imprisonment. After a 40-day hunger strike in 1990, he was hospitalized, where he escaped Israeli imprisonment and Palestine, and eventually traveled to Bulgaria in 1994.
- In December 2015, the Israeli embassy in Bulgaria requested the arrest and extradition of Omar Nayef Zayed from the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice, labeling him a "fugitive from justice." His home was raided on December 17 while he was not at home.
- Omar Nayef Zayed has since then taken refuge in the Palestinian embassy in Sofia.
- Israel is seeking to extradite Zayed under the European Convention on Extradition, which both it and Bulgaria have signed.
- Under the European Convention on Extradition, "political offenses" are specifically excluded from eligibility for extradition under the Convention, which is relevant to "criminal offenses."
- Palestinian prisoners imprisoned by Israel are political prisoners. Their imprisonment is an attempt to suppress their struggle against colonialism and occupation. They do not face regular civil or criminal courts; on the contrary, they are tried before Israeli military courts. Evidence is routinely obtained through torture or coercion, the judges themselves are part of the military, and secret evidence asserted by intelligence officials forms a major part of the "evidence" presented against Palestinians. They are the subject of political negotiations and agreements - which should have secured Zayed's freedom decades ago.
- Zayed is demanding to stay with his wife and family in Bulgaria, and calling on the Bulgarian government to reject the extradition request.
- If Zayed is extradited to Israel, he faces a continuing threat of torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. Hundreds of complaints of torture and abuse in Israeli interrogation centers and prisons have been documented by Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations
- There are numerous reports of the medical mistreatment or neglect of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. As Zayed continues to suffer from ill health as a result of his 40-day hunger strike 25 years ago, he is at risk of medical mistreatment inside Israeli prisons.
- Zayed's Bulgarian wife and three Bulgarian children will be stripped of the presence of their husband and father, who has by all accounts lived an exemplary life in Bulgaria.
- Not only would he be imprisoned in a distant country, Palestinian prisoners are regularly denied family visits and travelers of Palestinian descent traveling on European, American and other foreign passports are frequently denied entry at Israeli border crossings and airports. Extraditing Zayed means, in essence, separating him from his family permanently.
- Through this extradition request, Israel is also attempting to use the Bulgarian legal system and that of the European Union as an extension of its military courts – which allow evidence obtained through torture, secret evidence, and in no way meet international standards for fair trials. At the same time that the European Union is advocating public policy positions against Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem and the ongoing Israeli military occupation, the extradition of Omar Nayef Zayed would make the European Union and its constituent countries enforcement agents of just that military occupation and settlement system.

Further Resources on the Case of Omar Nayef Zayed

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<http://samidoun.net>

Sinn Fein: Bulgaria should reject Israeli extradition request

<http://www.sinnfein.ie/contents/37785>

Al Jazeera: "Palestinian evades extradition in Sofia embassy," Patrick O. Strickland, 8 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/palestinian-evades-israel-extradition-sofia-embassy-151229164019733.html>

Electronic Intifada: "Palestinian facing extradition takes refuge in Bulgaria embassy," Charlotte Kates, 21 December 2015

<https://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinian-facing-extradition-takes-refuge-bulgaria-embassy/15082>

Statement on the freedom fighter and liberated prisoner Omar Nayef Zayed, Palestinian Campaign in Solidarity with Omar Nayef Zayed

<http://samidoun.net/2015/12/statement-on-the-freedom-fighter-and-liberated-prisoner-omar-nayef-zayed/>

National Lawyers Guild (U.S.) Letters to Bulgarian Ambassador on the case of Omar Nayef Zayed

<http://samidoun.net/2016/01/national-lawyers-guild-committee-urges-bulgaria-not-to-extradite-former-palestinian-prisoner-zayed/>

European Convention on Extradition

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/024>

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Affairs,

http://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

Addameer, "Reaching the No-Peace Agreement: The role of Palestinian prisoner releases in final status negotiations between the parties," 2009

<http://www.addameer.org/files/Reports/addameer-report-reaching-the-no-peace-agreement.pdf>

Addameer, "Medical Negligence."

http://www.addameer.org/key_issues/medical_negligence

Joint NGO Statement Marking the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, June 2014.

<http://stoptorture.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Joint-Statement-on-International-Torture-Day-26-June-2014.pdf>

"Palestinian Detainees: No Security in Injustice," Caabu, 2012.

http://caabu.org/sites/default/files/resources/0802_CAABU_Palestinian%20detainees_singles%20SMALL.pdf

