

# JUSTICE FOR FORMER PALESTINIAN PRISONER **OMAR NAYEF ZAYED** BULGARIA: DON'T BE A PART OF ISRAELI TORTURE

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.

On December 15, 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; he has since then taken refuge in the Palestinian embassy in Sofia. Embassies are, under international law, protected from invasion by host country governments.

Israel is seeking to extradite Omar under the European Convention on Extradition, which both it and Bulgaria have signed. The Convention is specifically for "criminal offenses" - it excludes political offenses. Palestinian prisoners imprisoned by Israel are political prisoners.

Their imprisonment is an attempt to suppress their struggle against colonialism and occupation. It is the subject of political negotiations and agreements - which should have secured Omar's freedom decades ago. The Convention does not apply to Omar Nayef Zayed or any Palestinian prisoner, and Bulgaria should reject the request.

Omar is demanding to stay with his wife and family in Bulgaria, and calling on the Bulgarian government to reject the extradition request. "I must carry on this struggle, on

behalf of all Palestinian prisoners, not just myself. It is my responsibility," Omar said. Indeed, his case has significant repercussions for Palestinians in Europe generally, especially former prisoners and veterans of the struggle, whose lives are put at risk by this case.



## TAKE ACTION FOR JUSTICE FOR OMAR NAYEF ZAYED

**1. Call the Bulgarian Embassy in your country:** In the United States, (202)387-0174; in Canada, (613) 789-3215; in the UK +44 2075813144; in the EU +32 22358300 - and tell them not to extradite Omar Nayef Zayed. Let them know that Omar is a political prisoner and that his case is excluded by the European Convention on Extradition, and that Bulgaria should not allow itself to be used in order to support the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

**2. Send a message to the Bulgarian Minister of Justice and Foreign Minister** and tell them not to extradite Omar! Visit our website at [samidoun.net](http://samidoun.net) and send a letter online (click on "Justice for Omar") or email them at [press@justice.government.bg](mailto:press@justice.government.bg) and [minister@mfa.bg](mailto:minister@mfa.bg), urging that all attempts to extradite Omar Nayef Zayed be dropped and that he be allowed to live in peace with his family.