

Press Release: Calling on the Canadian Government to take a principled stance against Israel's illegal arbitrary detention of Palestinian prisoner Hisham Abu Hawash

OTTAWA (January 3, 2022) - The Coalition of Canadian Palestinian Organizations (CCPO) urges the Canadian government to call on Israel to free Palestinian political prisoner Hisham Abu Hawash, who is currently on his 140th day of hunger strike and hospitalized in life-or-death health conditions. Abu Hawash entered a semi-coma state on January 1, 2022.

Abu Hawash, age 40 and a father of five, is on hunger strike protesting his arbitrary detention, having been jailed under an administrative detention order without charge or trial, which has been renewed several times since October 27, 2020. A medical report prepared by Physicians for Human Rights in Israel - an Israeli human rights organization - warns that Abu Hawash's life is in "immediate danger" and he is at risk of death and organ failure due to extreme nutritional deficiencies.

Hisham's hunger strike is the last in a string of hunger strikes initiated since July 2021 by 17 Palestinian prisoners who are victims of arbitrary detention. Like many other Palestinian prisoners, Hisham has been subject to abuses and negligence at the hands of the Israeli military occupation authorities, including: denial of family visits; denial of access to legal counsel; and weeks in solitary confinement during his hunger strike, which is considered torture by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture.

This form of arbitrary detention is considered illegal under international law as it is prohibited by the United Nations division for human rights and Article 9 of the 1948 Universal Declaration for Human Rights, which decrees that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile".

As indicated by the Canadian government on the Global Affairs Canada website, "arbitrary detention violates established principles of human rights, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary". Israel is a signatory to the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State relations, which was launched by Canada on February 15, 2021 in Ottawa.

"All cases of arbitrary detention, whether they target Canadian nationals, dual nationals, nationals of partners and other states, are unacceptable. We will continue the fight against arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations, now and for the future." - Marc Garneau, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We urge the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly to uphold international law and Canada's own stated values by calling on Israel to end the illegal arbitrary detention of Hisham Abu Hawash and all other Palestinian prisoners held without charge or trial.