

Subject: Palestinian activist known by many in the SA Palestinian solidarity network arrested

From www.stophthewall.org

Free Mohammad Othman Now!

Latest News, Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, September 24th, 2009

On September 22, Mohammad Othman was arrested by soldiers on the Allenby Bridge Crossing, the border from Jordan to Palestine. He is now being held in Huwara prison as a prisoner of conscience, arrested solely for his human rights work.

Mohammad, 33 years old, has dedicated the last ten years of his life to the defense of Palestinian human rights. He has campaigned with the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign against the dispossession of Palestinian farmers and against the involvement of Israeli and international business in the violations of Palestinian human rights.

His village, Jayyous, has been devastated by the Apartheid Wall and Zufim - a settlement, built by Lev Leviev's companies. These companies are facing a successful boycott campaign because of their violations of Palestinian rights.

Mohammad was returning from one of his trip to Norway, during which he met with senior officials, including Norwegian Finance Minister Kristen Halvorsen. Norway's national Pension Fund recently announced that it had divested from Elbit, the Israeli company which provides both Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and other military technology for Occupation forces, as well as security systems for the Wall and settlements.

This is not the first time Palestinian human rights defenders have been arrested after trips abroad. Recently, Muhammad Srour, an eye witness at the UN Fact Finding Mission on Gaza, was arrested on his way back from Geneva. This arrest was a clear act of reprisal against Srour for speaking out about Israel's violations of international law. Arresting Palestinians as they return from travel is yet another Israeli tactic to try to silence Palestinian human rights defenders. It complements the overall policy of isolation of the Palestinian people behind checkpoints, walls and razor wire.

We call on international solidarity and human rights organizations to act immediately to bring attention to this case and advocate for the release of Mohammad Othman by:

Recommended Actions:

. Encourage others to join this campaign through petitions, demonstrations and / or letter writing / phone calling. Please provide them with contact information and details;

. Urge your representatives at consular offices in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem/Ramallah to demand the immediate release of Mohammad Othman. (For your consular contacts, see:

<http://www.embassiesabroad.com/embassies-in/Israel#11725>)

. Let the Israeli Embassy in your country know that you are campaigning for Mohammad's release and for a just and lasting peace based on international law

. Sign the online petition for Mohammad on:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/stopwall/petition.html>

. Bring the case of Mohammad to the attention of local and national media outlets;

. Follow the blog and facebook to free Mohammad Othman to see the latest updates and action alerts.

Blog: <http://www.freemohammadnow.blogspot.com/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=36429272741&ref=ts>

Mohammad Othman represents only one of the 11,000 Palestinians being held in Israeli prisons. More than 800 are being held in "administrative detention", meaning that they are imprisoned (indefinitely) without charge. International solidarity and governments have to hold Israel accountable and achieve an end to the large scale repression and mass imprisonment of Palestinians as part of their efforts to bring about an end to the occupation and the restoration of Palestinian rights.

Sample letter to embassies and foreign ministries:

Dear x,

I am writing to you to express my deepest concern about the detainment of Mohammad Othman on, September 22, at the border between Jordan and the West Bank. He was returning home after a visit in Norway.

I fear that the detainment of Mohammad Othman is a result of his peaceful criticism of violations of international law by Israeli authorities. The charges against him have not been made clear, but there is reason to believe that he is a prisoner of conscience, arrested solely for his human rights work through legal organizations.

I ask you to take all appropriate measures, including official inquiries and protests, to ensure Mohammad's immediate and unconditional release. Furthermore, whilst being held, he should be protected from any form of torture or ill-treatment, and the conditions of his detention should fulfill the requirements of international law.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,