



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AH

Our ref: AC/MJ
2 November 2017

Dear Boris

We ask that you take urgent diplomatic action to encourage Israeli authorities to reconsider the charges against Issa Amro, who is recognised as a nonviolent activist and community organiser, and has received the 'Human Rights Defender of the Year in Palestine' award by the United Nations. Amnesty International condemns Amro's charges in Israeli military court as 'baseless,' 'politically-motivated' and will consider Mr Amro a 'prisoner of conscience,' if convicted. Human rights experts from the United Nations described the charges as 'directed squarely at [Mr Amro's] lawful right to peacefully protest' and expressed concern for Mr Amro who may face years in prison.

Mr Amro coordinates a local initiative in Hebron that instructs young Palestinians in nonviolent opposition to Israeli settlement activities. In 2009, Mr Amro won the British 'One World Media' award for coordinating Israeli human rights group B'Tselem's camera distribution project in Hebron for documenting human rights violations. A representative of the British Consulate in Jerusalem attended Mr Amro's court date in July earlier this year along with representatives of other EU governments and the US Embassy. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office mentioned in their Human Rights Priority Country Status Report that they were 'concerned by a number of indictments levelled against human rights defenders such as in the case of the activist Issa Amro.' In May, members of the US Congress signed on to a letter to encourage US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to closely monitor the trial of Mr Amro.

We are concerned that Mr Amro will not receive a fair and impartial trial under the Israeli military court system, which has a self-reported conviction rate of 99.74%. Several of the 18 charges that Mr Amro faces are outdated or not internationally recognisable offenses, such as 'participating in a march without a permit.' As Amnesty International reported, the 2013 charge of assault would have been physically impossible for Mr Amro to commit, since he was already arrested and a video from the scene clearly shows another man responsible for the incident. We fear that Mr Amro's prosecution will not appropriately handle such inconsistencies.

Amro



Freedom of speech and assembly is recognised as a fundamental right in the United Kingdom and under international law. The United Kingdom therefore has a responsibility to protect nonviolent activists exercising the right to peaceful protest, such as Mr Amro who was furthermore arrested by Palestinian Preventive Security Forces in September for criticising the arrest of a journalist on social media. Mr Amro's arrest by the Palestinian Authority, also condemned by Amnesty International, as well as his trial in Israeli military court need to be carefully monitored by the United Kingdom. We should encourage Israel to uphold our shared values by respecting the rights of activists like Issa Amro. To protect freedom of expression in the territories is a step to secure a lasting peace and safety among Israelis and Palestinians. We ask that you take measures to urge Israel to reconsider the charges against Mr Amro, a well-recognised advocate for human rights.

Yours sincerely

Alistair Carmichael MP

Marie Rimmer MP

David Drew MP

Stephen Twigg MP

Matthew Pennycook MP

Lord Ahmed

Jeremy Lefroy MP

Jamie Stone MP

Clive Betts MP

West Streeting MP

Christine Jardine MP

Caroline Lucas MP

Norman Lamb MP

Layla Moran MP

Tommy Sheppard MP

Lord Dubs

Philippa Whitford MP

Baroness Sheehan

Ian Murray MP

Richard Burden MP

Andrew Slaughter MP

Alex Cunningham MP

Jo Swinson MP

Lord Tyler

Baroness Meacher

Lord Hollick

Baroness Blackstone

Tom Brake MP

Kate Hollern MP

Kelvin Hopkins MP

Grahame Morris MP

Ben Bradshaw MP

Alan Brown MP

Crispin Blunt MP

Baroness Kennedy

Julie Cooper MP