



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LPHR, Addameer and National Lawyers Guild joint statement on the appalling sentencing of leading Palestinian human rights defender, Ms Khalida Jarrar

London, Ramallah and New York, 04 January 2016 - Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR), Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer) and the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) are deeply appalled at the sentencing of leading Palestinian human rights defender, Ms Khalida Jarrar, to 15 months imprisonment by an Israeli military court on 7 December 2015. She was further fined 10,000 NIS and given a suspended sentence of 12 months within a 5 year period.

Ms Jarrar accepted a guilty plea on two of the 12 charges against her – membership in an illegal organisation and incitement to kidnap Israeli soldiers – despite her rejection of the merits of all charges. She reluctantly agreed the plea deal because she did not believe that the Israeli military court system – which has a reported¹ conviction rate of more than 99 per cent - would provide her with a fair trial. She was also aware that her sentence if convicted on all charges could range between 3.5 to 7 years.

When the military prosecutor offered the 15 month plea deal he insisted in maintaining the charge of incitement against Ms Jarrar despite arguments from her legal representatives that the trial, which had begun on 25 August 2015, demonstrated that the prosecution did not have reliable evidence to prove the charge. In relation to the charge of membership of an illegal organisation, the fundamental problem that confronted Ms Jarrar is that all Palestinian political parties are considered illegal according to Israeli military orders. It is against this outrageous context that Ms Jarrar felt compelled to accept the guilty plea in return for a reduced sentence.

Ms Jarrar will serve her 15 month imprisonment in Hasharon prison in Israel. This is despite the international law prohibition against the forcible transfer and detention of protected persons outside of occupied territory.

Ms Jarrar has been continuously imprisoned following her arrest at her home on 2 April 2015 at approximately 01:30am. The 12 charges subsequently issued against Ms Jarrar indicated that her arrest, detention and indictment by Israeli military authorities were as a direct result of her human rights advocacy work on behalf of prisoners' rights, and for exercising her rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

Ms Jarrar is a Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member and vice-chairperson of the Board of Directors of Addameer. She has been the head of the Prisoners Commission of the PLC since 2006, and in February 2015 was appointed to the Palestinian National Committee for the follow-up of the International Criminal Court.

LPHR, Addameer and NLG submitted a complaint to the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders in June 2015 which detailed our very serious concerns that Ms Jarrar was

1 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/nea/220358.htm>



being illegitimately targeted and punished by Israeli military authorities as a result of her significant work promoting and protecting the human rights of Palestinian prisoners.

We submitted that the arrest, detention, use of secret evidence and indictment of Ms Jarrar amounted to an illegitimate and grave interference with a range of fundamental rights under international human rights law. We further clarified that Ms Jarrar's peaceful work to promote, protect and realise human rights and fundamental freedoms means she is entitled to the human rights protections outlined in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

LPHR, Addameer and NLG requests the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders make immediate contact with the government of Israel to protest Ms Jarrar's sentencing which resulted from a process that lacked basic respect for fundamental civil and political rights. When human rights defenders, such as Ms Jarrar, are unable to work because of arrest, detention or intimidation, they cannot properly protect people facing violations of their human rights.

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About Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR)

[LPHR](#) is a lawyer-based legal charity in the United Kingdom that works on legal projects aimed at protecting and advancing Palestinian human rights.

About Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer)

[Addameer](#) is a Palestinian non-governmental, civil institution that works to support Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli and Palestinian prisons.

About National Lawyers Guild (NLG)

[NLG](#) is a non-governmental, public interest association based in the United States that works to protect civil liberties and human rights as afforded by international law.