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Re: Ongoing restrictions on Palestinian woman human rights defender and lawyer Diala Ayesh in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Dear Special Rapporteur, Ms Andrea Bolaños Vargas,

We, the undersigned organizations, would like to draw your attention to the case of Palestinian woman human rights defender and lawyer Diala Ayesh, who continues to face reprisals linked to her peaceful human rights work following her release from Damon Prison in Israel on 14 January 2025, after nearly one year of administrative detention without charges or trial. Front Line Defenders has documented her case, and found the following¹:

Diala Ayesh is a Palestinian woman human rights defender and lawyer. She has dedicated her work to advocating for the freedom and fair treatment of Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, focusing on ensuring fair trial guarantees and promoting freedom of expression. Since late 2023, she intensified her documentation of detention conditions, including torture and other ill-treatment, affecting Palestinian prisoners and detainees. As a consequence of her human rights and legal work, Diala Ayesh has faced arrests, threats, harassment and other forms of retaliation from both the Israeli occupation forces and the Palestinian Authority security forces in the West Bank.²

Despite her release, Israeli authorities continue to impose arbitrary restrictions on Diala Ayesh, significantly undermining her rights and her ability to carry out her professional and human rights activities. These include an Israeli-issued travel ban against her, preventing her from travelling abroad and restricting her participation in international conferences, academic programmes, professional exchanges and human rights advocacy initiatives.

Diala Ayesh has submitted requests to the Israeli Civil Administration, which is an Israeli military unit responsible for implementing Israel's civilian policy in the occupied West Bank, seeking the removal of the travel ban. However, during legal proceedings, substantial portions of the hearings reportedly took place in closed sessions attended only by representatives of the prosecution. Neither Diala Ayesh nor her legal counsel were granted access to the evidence relied upon by the authorities, which was reportedly contained in a "secret file". Her challenge was ultimately rejected, and the travel ban remains in force without a clearly defined duration, effectively rendering it indefinite. The established procedures require Diala Ayesh to wait for a period

¹ For more information: <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/diala-ayesh-released-prison>

² Amnesty International, Palestinian security forces escalate brutal campaign of repression, 7 July 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/07/palestinian-security-forces-escalate-brutal-campaign-of-repression-2/>

of 9 months from the date of the military's last rejection before she can submit a new request. On 2 August 2026, she submitted a new petition to the Israeli Civil Administration to lift the ban as part of her ongoing legal efforts to reclaim her right to freedom of movement and professional practice.

We, the undersigned organizations, are deeply concerned that the continued imposition of an open-ended travel ban against Diala Ayesh constitutes a form of judicial harassment and retaliation against a woman human rights defender and lawyer for her legitimate and peaceful work. The use of secret evidence inaccessible to the affected individual and her legal representatives raises serious concerns regarding due process guarantees and the right to a fair hearing.

We further note that Israeli authorities use restrictions on freedom of movement as a key tool in their crackdown against Palestinian human rights defenders and lawyers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Such measures often prevent human rights defenders and lawyers from engaging with international human rights mechanisms, participating in professional exchanges, accessing educational opportunities and carrying out advocacy activities. In addition to the adverse impact on their professional activities, these restrictions also interfere with their right to family and overall personal lives. Additionally, we acknowledge the ongoing attacks against human rights work in the OPT, from restrictions on freedom of movement, to detention, harassment and military raids on offices of human rights organizations, as well as designations under counter-terrorism legislation.

The ongoing travel ban against Diala Ayesh is inconsistent with Israel's obligations under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, particularly with regard to freedom of movement, fair trial guarantees and access to an effective remedy. It also raises concerns under the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which recognizes the right of every person, individually and in association with others, to promote and protect human rights and to communicate with international bodies and organizations.

We note that travel bans have been a long-standing tactic used by Israel against Palestinian human rights defenders and released political prisoners and their family members. While this has been the reality of many Palestinians for years, it has further intensified after October 2023. While many released Palestinian political prisoners were forced into exile, their family members are still not allowed to travel to reunite with their loved ones.

In light of the above we respectfully request that you:

1. Engage with the Israeli authorities regarding the ongoing travel ban imposed on Diala Ayesh and seek clarification concerning its legal basis, duration and compatibility with international human rights standards;
2. Urge the Israeli authorities to immediately lift all arbitrary restrictions on Diala Ayesh's freedom of movement, including the travel ban, and ensure that she can carry out her legitimate human rights and professional activities without hindrance;
3. Raise concerns regarding the use of secret evidence and closed proceedings to impose restrictive measures against Palestinian human rights defenders, particularly where such practices undermine fair trial guarantees and access to an effective remedy;
4. Monitor the case of Diala Ayesh within your mandate and continue to address the broader pattern of restrictions, reprisals and judicial harassment faced by Palestinian human rights defenders and lawyers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel.

We remain gravely concerned that the measures imposed against Diala Ayeshe are linked to her legitimate and peaceful human rights work documenting detention conditions and advocating for the rights of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, and that her case is emblematic of the crackdown faced by Palestinian human rights defenders and lawyers more broadly.

We respectfully request your attention to this matter and would welcome any action you may take within your mandate.

Yours respectfully,

Front Line Defenders

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Lawyers for Lawyers

Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute

EuroMed Rights

Human Rights Watch

Amnesty International

