

**Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu  
Office of the Prime Minister  
3 Kaplan St.  
PO Box 187  
Kiryat Ben-Gurion  
Jerusalem 91950, Israel**

Brussels, 14 October 2013

**Re: Concerns regarding the arrest and detention of Anas Barghouti, a Palestinian human rights lawyer**

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concerns over the arrest and detention of Mr Anas Barghouti, a thirty-year old human rights lawyer involved in the defence of Palestinian prisoners. Since 2009, Mr Barghouti has worked as a lawyer for the *Addameer Association for Prisoner Support and Human Rights*, through which he provided legal support and representation for Palestinians held by the Palestinian Authority Security Forces.

According to the information that we received, on 15 September 2013 Mr Barghouti was arrested by the Israeli Army at a military checkpoint near Bethlehem in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Reliable reports indicate that soldiers confiscated his phone, questioned him, and then blindfolded and handcuffed him prior to his transfer to a detention centre in the Israeli settlement of Etzion. Mr Barghouti was then taken to the Ofer Military Complex where he now remains.

It is especially worrisome that following his arrest, Mr Barghouti was held in detention without charges until 24 September 2013, when an Israeli military court finally charged him with "membership in the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine" - an organisation banned by Israel, and "leadership of a committee to organise demonstrations". Mr Barghouti denied both charges.

The CCBE believes that Mr Barghouti's arrest is closely connected to his peaceful and legitimate professional activity in defence of human rights and considers him a prisoner of conscience.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your Excellency's attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

Furthermore, Article 23 states that:

*Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to take effective steps to ensure that Mr Anas Barghouti is immediately and unconditionally released. The CCBE also implores you to take all necessary measures to ensure that lawyers in the Palestinian Occupied Territories are able to perform their duties and to express their views without any fear of intimidation and harassment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Tsouroulis', written in a cursive style.

EVANGELOS TSOUROULIS  
CCBE President