

URGENT ACTION

MURAD SHTEWI FREED, BUT STILL RISKS PRISON

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Murad Shtewi was released on 23 January, just before completing his nine-and-a-half-month prison sentence for involvement in peaceful protests. However, he is still under a suspended prison sentence, which he will have to serve if he takes part in any more demonstrations. He has campaigned for 12 years for the reopening of the main connecting road to his village. The Israeli authorities closed the villagers' access to the road in 2002, restricting its use to residents of nearby Israeli settlements.

He had been sentenced in December 2014 by the Israeli Salem Military Court on charges of organizing and participating in an "unauthorized" protest under Military Order 101, which is used to punish Palestinian demonstrators and restrict their right to peaceful protest. It forbids any assembly, vigil, procession or publication deemed to be "political" and requires permission from an Israeli military commander for all gatherings of 10 or more people. It carries a maximum 10-year sentence. Murad Shtewi was also found guilty of causing a public disturbance. The charges were based on statements from two men from his West Bank village, Kufr Qadum, who had been detained by the Israeli authorities for several weeks, during a long interrogation in circumstances that amounted to duress. In addition to the custodial and suspended sentences he was fined about US\$2,550.

Murad Shtewi was arrested on 29 April 2014 and on 2 May he was briefly interrogated by the Israel Security Agency. On the same day his lawyer petitioned a military court for his release. His trial lasted for five months, though the court sat for only five days. His repeated requests for bail were rejected by the court.

Please write immediately in Hebrew, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to drop immediately the suspended sentence imposed on Murad Shtewi, as it is designed to prevent him from exercising his legitimate right to peaceful protest;
- Calling on them to protect the right to freedom of expression and assembly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by rescinding Military Order 101, which restricts Palestinians' right to gather for peaceful protests.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 APRIL 2015 TO:

Prime Minister
Benjamin Netanyahu
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan St, PO Box 187
Kiryat Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem 91950, Israel
Email: b.netanyahu@pmo.gov.il /
pm_eng@pmo.gov.il
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Military Judge Advocate General
Brigadier General Danny Efroni
6 David Elazar Street
Hakirya, Tel Aviv, Israel
Fax: 011 972 3 569 4526
Email: avimn@idf.gov.il
Salutation: Dear Judge Advocate General

And copies to:
Minister of Defense
Moshe Ya'alon
Ministry of Defense
37 Kaplan Street, Hakirya
Tel Aviv 61909, Israel
Fax: 011 972 3 691 6940 / 011 972 3 696 2757

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Ron Dermer, Embassy of Israel
3514 International Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 364 5607 | **Phone:** 1 202 364 5500 | **Email:** info@israelemb.org -OR- info@washington.mfa.gov.il

Please let us know if you took action so that we can track our impact! **EITHER** send a short email to uan@aiusa.org with "UA 137/14" in the subject line, and include in the body of the email the number of letters and/or emails you sent, **OR** fill out this [short online form](#) (press Ctrl + click on link) to let us know how you took action. Thank you for taking action! Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 137/14. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/038/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kufr Qadum village, west of the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, has a population of around 3,500. Most of its land has been taken by the Israeli authorities to build and service the illegal settlement bloc of Kedumim. In 2002 during the second Intifada (Palestinian uprising), the Israeli authorities closed off the main road connecting the village to the nearest city, Nablus, restricting its use to Israeli settlers only, preventing Kufr Qadum's residents and other Palestinians in surrounding areas from using it. Before local Israeli settlements were expanded, the road had been the main connection to Nablus. The villagers' weekly peaceful demonstrations have continued since 2011 to demand the reopening of the road to Palestinians and to express their opposition to the Israeli military occupation and the expansion of illegal settlements. Israeli forces frequently use unnecessary and excessive force, in breach of international law and standards, against the demonstrators, which has resulted in hundreds of injuries, often serious, to villagers, including children. These include injuries from Israeli forces firing lethal weapons, such as rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition, as well as other less lethal weapons such as tear gas, which Israeli forces use in residential areas and sometimes to target demonstrators as well as journalists. Murad Shtewi has been injured a number of times by Israeli forces using excessive force. On 6 September 2013, a tear gas canister hit him directly, breaking his leg.

Murad Shtewi, a father of three, works at the Palestinian Ministry of Education office in the city of Qalqilya. He is a leading member of the Palestinian Kufr Qaddum Popular Resistance Committee, playing a prominent role in the village's weekly demonstration. On arrest in April 2014, Murad Shtewi was held in Huwara military camp near Nablus. A petition by his lawyer against an order to keep him detained throughout proceedings was heard by the military court of appeals on 18 May and rejected four days later. On the day he was sentenced, Murad Shtewi told local human rights NGO Addameer and Lawyers for Human Rights in the UK that "freedom of movement is a legitimate right guaranteed by all international laws. The peaceful protests are a right as well to demand your rights. I ask the world to increase their solidarity in support of the Palestinian cause to end the occupation, and to shed light on Israeli state terror imposed on children, elderly people and women, and the land".

Murad Shtewi's conviction was part of a pattern of harassment by Israeli forces against him and other human rights defenders involved in weekly demonstrations in villages across the West Bank. Murad Shtewi was arrested twice during demonstrations and released without charge. He was first arrested on 16 March 2012 after an Israeli security forces dog attacked his nephew Ahmad Shtewi during a demonstration. A video shows Murad Shtewi asking soldiers to help his nephew and call off the dog. The Israeli forces sprayed Murad Shtewi in the face with pepper spray and arrested him. He was released without charge after paying bail of around US\$1,500. He was assaulted and arrested again on 20 December 2013 during the demonstration in the village, and was released without charge four days later after paying bail of around US\$1,500.

Name: Murad Shtewi (m)

Issues: Human rights defender, Freedom of expression, Legal concern

Further information on UA: 137/14 (23 May 2014) and update (18 December 2014)

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