

1 September 2016

## **Israel/OPT: Ongoing threats and harassment against human rights defender Imad Abu Shamsiyya**

Human rights defender, Mr **Imad Abu Shamsiyya** continues to receive threats and harassment over his role in documenting crimes committed by Israeli occupying forces.

[Imad Abu Shamsiyya](#) is a long-standing activist in Palestine and volunteer at **B'Tselem**, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, where he is involved in documenting the occupation of Tel-Rumeida. He is also the founder of the **Human Rights Defenders Group**, a non partisan group that aims to document and expose violations of international law and injustice against families in areas of conflict under Israeli occupation.

On 26 August 2016, the human rights defender received a message in Hebrew on his *Facebook* account, which included the logo of Israeli extremist right wing movement *Kach*, a picture of the human rights defender and the statement, “*It is the time to be killed. You are a source of danger for the settlers of Tel-Rumeida*”. Furthermore, a video in Hebrew was also circulated on the Internet, accusing Imad Abu Shamsiyya and his family of being terrorists and agents for “suspicious” organisations like B'Tselem. The video blamed Abu Shamsiyya for the detention and trial of Elor Azaria, the Israeli soldier who killed a Palestinian that was wounded in March 2016 in Tel Rumeida. This incident was widely covered by the media thanks to video footage shot by Imad Abu Shamsiyya.

The human rights defender has repeatedly received death threats after uploading this video to the Internet since [March 2016](#). These threats have included an anonymous call, in which the caller stated: “*We will burn you just like we burned the Dawabshehs*”, a family who were killed in an arson attack in July 2015. Pictures and printed t-shirts of Imad Abu Shamsiyya and his family, calling for their murder, have also reportedly been circulating throughout Israeli settlements in Hebron. The human rights defender reported these incidents to the Israeli police but no actions have been taken yet to protect him and his family.

Imad Abu Shamsiyya and his family have been subjected to repeated harassment as a result of his human rights activism, including physical attacks, raids on their family home, and repeated arrests. In September 2015, the human rights defender and his son were subjected to travel restrictions. In May 2015, Imad Abu Shamsiyya's family home was subjected to an attempted arson attack by settlers in the middle of the night. In March 2015, a group of soldiers invaded his family home, searched the house and confiscated the family's computer hard disk and a memory card containing footage filmed by B'Tselem volunteers.

Front Line Defenders expresses grave concern about the threats and violence against Imad Abu Shamsiyya and his family and the repeated acts of harassment and intimidation against him, which it believes to be directly motivated by his peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities to:**

1. Immediately take all necessary measures to ensure the physical and psychological security of human rights defender **Imad Abu Shamsiyya** and his family;
2. Launch a full and impartial investigation into the threats made against Imad Abu Shamsiyya and his family, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the **Occupied Palestinian Territories** are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.