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Occupied Palestinian Territory: Judicial harassment of human rights defender Mohammed Khatib continues

On 7 May 2017, human rights defender, **Mohammed Khatib**, will appear before an Israeli Military Court following three and half years of lengthy court proceedings following his participation in peaceful demonstrations at Beit Il checkpoint, in the village of Bettin, on 7 March 2013. The human rights defender is facing three charges of entering a closed military zone, participating in an illegal demonstration, and disturbing the soldiers.

[Mohammed Khatib](#) is a Palestinian human rights defender, lawyer and board member of the **Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC)**. The PSCC facilitates and strengthens communication between popular committees in Palestinian villages who suffer human rights violations such as displacement as a result of the Israeli occupation and who struggle against what the PSCC calls the 'apartheid wall', referred to by Israel as the 'security fence'.

The upcoming military trial of the human rights defender will take place on 7 May 2017 in Ofer military court. According to Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations, the conviction rate of Israeli military courts has ranged from ninety to ninety-nine percent in recent years.

Mohammed Khatib has previously been arrested and detained by Israeli forces on several occasions on account of his participation in peaceful demonstrations. On 20 January 2017, Israeli forces arrested Mohammed Khatib while he attended his colleagues' military hearing for participation in a peaceful demonstration. He was held in Ofer prison for four days and was also accused of participating in an "illegal protest" against Israel's illegal annexation of Palestinian land in Jerusalem. In 2014, he was detained for participating in a tree-planting project in *Turmusaya*. All these charges against the human rights defender are still pending and he is expected to have to stand trial for them in the future.

Front Line Defenders condemns the continued judicial harassment of human rights defender, Mohammed Khatib, as it believes it to be solely related to his legitimate and peaceful human rights activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Front Line Defenders further condemns the pattern of intimidation, harassment and prosecution of human rights defenders by the Israeli occupation forces.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Israel to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally drop all charges against **Mohammed Khatib** as Front Line Defenders believes that they are solely the result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
2. Urges the authorities to stop the judicial harassment of human rights defenders, including through military courts;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.