

25 May 2020

## **OPT/Israel: Travel ban on human rights defender Laith Abu Zeyad**

On 31 May 2020, human rights defender **Laith Abu Zeyad** is due to attend his hearing regarding a travel ban imposed on him on 26 October 2019.

[Laith Abu Zeyad](#) is a Palestinian human rights defender and a campaigner with Amnesty International. He campaigns against travel companies that promote tourism in the Israeli illegal settlements in the West Bank, whilst also focusing on exposing and documenting the discrimination and human rights violations committed by the Israeli authorities against Palestinians.

On 26 October 2019, Laith Abu Zeyad was stopped by Israeli border authorities from leaving at the border crossing between occupied West Bank and Jordan. After waiting for four hours on the border, Laith Abu Zeyad was informed that the Israeli intelligence agency had imposed a travel ban on him for undisclosed security reasons.

In September 2019, the human rights defender had been denied entry to occupied East Jerusalem to accompany his mother for medical treatment. Similarly, the denied entry was allegedly due to undisclosed security reasons.

Laith Abu Zeyad believes that these punitive measures taken against him are due to his work on a [report](#) by Amnesty International regarding four travel companies that operate within the illegal Israeli settlements, and more broadly, his peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

There have been several unsuccessful attempts to lift the travel ban on Laith Abu Zeyad. On 13 February 2020, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) rejected a petition submitted by Amnesty International requesting to lift the travel ban. On 25 March 2020, another petition was submitted to the Jerusalem District Court, the hearing for which will be held on 31 May 2020.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned regarding the continuous harassment of human rights defenders in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by the Israeli authorities. Front Line Defenders believes the travel ban on human rights defender Laith Abu Zeyad is directly linked to his peaceful and legitimate human rights work and activities.

### **Front Line Defenders urge the Israeli Authorities to:**

1. Lift the travel ban on Laith Abu Zeyad as it is believed that this measure was taken against him solely on account of his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in OPT/Israel and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.