

4 February 2021

Opt/Israel: Sections of human rights defenders Fayza and Imad Abu Shamsiyya's house declared a closed military zone

On 3 February 2021, the lawyer of human rights defenders **Fayza Abu Shamsiyya** and **Imad Abu Shamsiyya** informed them that the Military commander of Hebron had rejected their appeal against a military order which declares sections of their house in Tel Al-Ramida as a closed military zone.

[Fayza Abu Shamsiyya](#) is a woman human rights defender and a member of Human Rights Defenders Palestine with whom she documents human rights violations committed against Palestinians. She is also a volunteer with the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling where she studies the environmental consequences of the Israeli occupation. [Imad Abu Shamsiyya](#) is a co-founder of the Human Rights Defenders Group, a non-partisan group that aims to document and expose violations of international law and injustice in conflict areas under Israeli occupation. The human rights defender is a long-standing activist in Palestine and former volunteer at B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, where he was involved in documenting the occupation of Tel Al-Ramida.

On the night of 1 February 2021, the two human rights defenders noticed that the Israeli army had pasted a sign in the front yard of their house, marking it as a closed military zone (in Hebrew). After their lawyer reviewed the information regarding this decision he informed them that the Military Commander of Hebron had issued this order on 10 June 2020, which meant that an appeal against the order would most likely be rejected. The two human rights defenders asset that they were never informed of such an order. On 2 February 2021, the lawyer submitted an appeal against the order to the Military Commander. On 3 February the appeal was rejected due to the fact that the order has been issued in June and therefore the appeal period has already expired.

According to this military order, a section of the front yard of the human rights defenders' house is marked as a closed military zone due to its strategic advantage as a watch point for the city of Hebron. This order technically permits the Israeli army to enter the front yard of Fayza and Imad Abu Shamsiyya's house, without a court order, whenever they wish. If civilians enter this zone they can be criminalised, and charged with 'entering closed military zone'. Furthermore, in 2002, the roof of the human rights defenders' house was being used by Israeli soldiers as a military barracks point. Fayza and Imad Abu Shamsiyya launched a campaign against this which they won in court, and the military barracks was removed form their house. Nevertheless, the roof is still marked as a closed military area which the human rights defenders are not permitted to use.

Fayza and Imad Abu Shamsiyya have been continuously [harassed](#) by the Israeli army and Israeli settlers, and their house has been frequently [raided](#) by the Israeli army. Due to the location of their house, some of their children are not allowed to visit them; their eldest son [Awni Abu Shamsiyya](#) is not permitted to enter the neighbourhood of Tel Remeida where his parents live until 2023. In November 2019, Fayza Abu Shamsiyya was [arbitrarily arrested](#) for several hours, put under house arrest for fifteen days, and then charged with 'obstructing the Israeli Defence Forces'.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned regarding the military order which claims parts of the human rights defenders' house as a closed military zone, as well as the ongoing harassments against the human rights defenders and their children by Israeli authorities and settlers.

Front Line Defenders urges the Israeli authorities to:

1. Quash the military order, as it is believed that they are solely motivated by the human rights defender's legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Immediately and unconditionally remove all restrictions on the free movement of the human rights defenders and cease all further forms of surveillance or harassment against them, as it is believed that these measures are not only solely related to his legitimate human rights activities but, furthermore, constitute a direct transgression of the rights of the two human rights defenders;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in the Occupied Palestinian Territories 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.

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