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### **OPT/Israel: Human rights defender Hafez Huraini detained after being injured as a result of an attack by Israeli settlers**

**Hafez Huraini** appeared before an Israeli military court on 15 September 2022. The human rights defender is falsely accused of attempted murder, harming the security of the area and severe assault. The court has ruled to extend his detention for another 5 days, and his next trial appearance is scheduled on 19 September 2022 at 1:00 PM. On 12 September 2022, Israeli forces arrested human rights defender Hafez Huraini from his land in at-Tuwani village, Masafer Yatta, Hebron. His detention occurred after a group of armed Israeli settlers attacked him, resulting in severe injuries and breaking both of his arms. On 15 September 2022, Hafez Huraini appeared before an Israeli military court where his detention was extended for another 5 days.

[Hafez Huraini](#) is a Palestinian farmer and human rights defender from at-Tuwani village, Masafer Yatta, Hebron, Occupied Palestinian Territory. Hafez Huraini is a land rights defender and a leader of the South Hebron Hills Popular Committee, a non-violent resistance group since 2000. Hafez Huraini has been repeatedly assaulted by settlers and arrested by Israeli authorities while working on his land in at-Tuwani village. He is also the father of Sami and Sameeha Huraini, Palestinian human rights defenders and co-founders of Youth of Sumud in the South Hebron Hills region of Palestine. Sami and Sameeha Huraini were the award winners from the Middle East and North Africa of the [2021 Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk](#).

On 12 September 2022, around 6:00PM, a group of armed Israeli settlers attacked human rights defender Hafez Huraini while working on his land in at-Tuwani village, Masafer Yatta, Hebron. The group of five settlers were armed with sticks, metal pipes, and an M16 rifle. One armed settler reportedly started attacking the human rights defender with a metal pipe, injuring him and breaking his left arm. Hafez Huraini in response waved the shovel he was using to work the land at the settler defending himself. Hafez Huraini fell to the ground while the armed settlers kept assaulting him until they broke his right arm. In the meantime a settler with a M16 rifle started firing bullets in the air.

Dozens of Israeli soldiers arrived at the scene. The settlers slashed the tires of an ambulance from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society that arrived to the scene during the presence of the soldiers. While the Israeli soldiers continued to physically harass Palestinians who arrived to the scene, the settlers started destroying the trees and the night lighting system on Hafez Huraini's land. The Israeli forces closed down all entrances and exits to at-Tuwani village shortly after the incident and began a detention operation while raiding homes and firing tear gas and sound bombs. Later at the scene, Israeli soldiers arrested human rights defender Hafez Huraini claiming that he had injured one of the armed settlers during the attack.

The human rights defender was brought away in an ambulance by Israeli soldiers and was taken to the Soroka Medical Center in Beersheba in southern Israel to receive medical care for his broken arms. Hafez Huraini was accompanied by armed soldiers and was initially not allowed to speak to

his lawyer. His lawyer was later able to talk to him for a few minutes and the lawyer informed his family that he was transferred to a detention centre inside the Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron for questioning without the presence of his lawyer.

The South Hebron Hills region is one of the most dangerous areas for Palestinians in the West Bank, with some of the most extremist Israeli settlements located in the area. The Huraini family is committed to a peaceful resistance as a strategic choice to end the Israeli occupation. They are frequently being harassed by both the Israeli settlers and Israeli authorities for their human rights work. Their home town in South Hebron, at-Tuwani, is a border village on the green line. As a result, their community is frequently subjected to harassment and attacks.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the violent attack and the unlawful detention of human rights defender Hafez Huraini, as well as the lack of accountability of settlers in Hebron and different areas of the Occupied West Bank. It also believes that the detention and the attack of human rights defender Hafez Huraini were carried against him solely as a result of his peaceful resistance.

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

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Hafez Huraini and allow him to contact his family and legal representative;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the violent attack of human rights defender Hafez Huraini on 12 September 2022, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee protection for Palestinian human rights defenders in the West Bank against settler's harassment and attacks, and guarantee that Israeli settlers are being held accountable for similar incidents of violence towards Palestinians and their property;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in OPT are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

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