



Israeli Police Elicit Widespread Condemnation for Detaining Prominent Palestinian Activists and Journalist Givara Budeiri

Israeli security forces have drawn widespread condemnation for enacting “Operation Law and Order” which seeks to round up Palestinian activists and demonstrators who protested against Israel’s recent string of human rights abuses, both in its bombing campaign of Gaza and towards residents in the West Bank. So far, over 2,100 Palestinians have been unlawfully taken into custody by the Israeli authorities as part of this campaign, with several prominent activists among them. Muna and Mohammed El-Kurd, two of the most well-known Palestinian activists in the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, were among the individuals arrested on suspicion of planning and participating in riots. In reality, these two, along with the other activists detained by Israel, organized protests to demonstrate against the Israeli government’s bombardment of civilian and residential targets in Gaza as well as the plans to forcibly displace numerous Palestinian families from their generational homes in Sheikh Jarrah. In the preceding days, Israeli police have also been criticized for the assault and arrest of journalist Givara Budeiri while she was covering a demonstration. The illegitimate detainment of Palestinians and journalists during the course of the operation is yet another example of state-sponsored discrimination by Israel, and adds to its reputation as one of the worst countries in the world for human rights.

Israel’s abusive and problematic campaign to silence Palestinian activists and demonstrators has been carried out by security forces raiding towns that are mainly comprised of Palestinians. The authorities are carrying out searches of private homes and arbitrarily detaining individuals until legal charges are submitted and potential prison sentences imposed. A primary reason for the detentions were demonstrations that occurred in several cities, including Haifa and Nazareth, against the planned expulsion of several Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah. However, these demonstrations remained peaceful until the entrance of illegal Israeli settlers, aided by the police, who antagonized and provoked demonstrators by assaulting people and chanting slogans such as “death to Arabs.” Despite this, there will be no reprisals against the illegal settlers, as Israel’s biased judiciary and kangaroo court system consistently finds Palestinians at fault without evidence. Israel’s farcical judicial system has two sets of laws, one for Israeli Jews, and another for Palestinians, which has long been used to enforce Israel’s apartheid practices.

In addition to civilian activists, Israeli security forces detained an Al Jazeera journalist covering the developments through force, prompting harsh criticism. Conduct such as this should be unacceptable in civilized nations, as it defies journalistic freedom, and impinges upon human rights. Israel however, has proven itself to be unconcerned with either of these, as is evidenced by its decades-long policy of discriminating against Palestinians and anybody sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. Despite the arrests, activists remain emboldened to continue fighting for justice in the illegally-occupied Palestinian territories. Support for Palestinian rights has rallied in recent months, as people around the world have started to understand Israel’s apartheid practices and human rights violations against Palestinians.