

22 October 2021

## **Occupied Palestinian Territory – Human rights defender facing deportation for alleged “breach of allegiance”**

On 18 October 2021, human rights defender and lawyer **Salah Hammouri** was notified of the Israeli Minister of Interior’s decision to revoke his permanent residency in Jerusalem and deport him to France on the basis of his alleged “breach of allegiance to the State of Israel”.

[Salah Hammouri](#) is a French-Palestinian human rights defender, lawyer and field researcher at Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association based in Jerusalem. The human rights defender advocates for justice and accountability for violations of Palestinians human rights. Following his release as part of a prisoner exchange deal in 2011, Salah Hammouri’s liberty, work and freedom of expression have been continually attacked by Israeli authorities.

On 18 October 2021, Israel’s Minister of Interior notified Salah Hammouri of her decision relating to the revocation of the human rights defender’s permanent residency in Jerusalem and his imminent deportation. The decision is based on Salah Hammouri’s alleged “breach of allegiance to the State of Israel” and on vaguely-worded and poorly-defined allegations of “terrorist activities” and/or affiliation with “terrorist entities,” relating to “secret information” he allegedly withheld from the public. Salah Hammouri has been given 30 days to appeal the decision. Currently, the human rights defender has also had his Palestinian ID card revoked and cannot travel. Previously, Israel banned the human rights defender from the West Bank for almost 16 months and deported his wife, **Elsa Lefort**, a French national, separating Salah Hammouri from his wife and son.

Salah Hammouri has been subjected to continuous harassment by the Israeli authorities, including travel bans, exorbitant bail and fines, house arrests, and family separation. Following these targeted attempts, Israeli authorities first notified Salah Hammouri of their intent to revoke his permanent residency in Jerusalem and deport him on 3 September 2020 due to charges of “breach of allegiance to the State of Israel”. On 29 June 2021, the Israeli Minister of Interior had declared her intention to adopt the recommendation proposed by the previous position-holder of permanently revoking the human rights defender’s residency.

The revocation of the human rights defender’s residency status on vague grounds of “terrorist activities” and “withholding secret information” as well as previous arrests and forms of harassment against him marks a grave expansion of Israel’s systematic policies and practices intended to silence Palestinian human rights defenders who seek justice and accountability for violations of Palestinian rights.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the decision and allegations of terrorism brought against Salah Hammouri in response to his peaceful and legitimate human rights work. Front Line Defenders also expresses concern about the increased executive power given to the Israeli Minister of Interior in 2018 to deport Palestinians failing to pass the criteria set forth in the Entry into Israel Law. The use by Israel of its domestic Entry into Israel Law to the protected Palestinian population in East Jerusalem, revoking permanent residencies, is a measure of direct forcible transfer, in violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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

1. Immediately reverse the decision of the revocation of Salah Hammouri’s residency and reinstate his Palestinian ID;

2. Take measures to ensure that government officials or other public figures refrain from making statements or declaration stigmatising the legitimate work of human rights defenders;
3. Immediately cease all further harassment of Salah Hammouri and his family, as Front Line believes that the family separation and entry ban of Salah Hammouri's wife and child was solely as a result of his legitimate work in defence of human rights;
4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Palestine 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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