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Joint Public Statement

Complaints submitted to the United Nations concerning the Israeli detention of two female Palestinian human rights defenders: Ms Shireen Issawi and Ms Bushra al-Taweel

London and Ramallah 16 September 2014 - Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR) and Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer) have submitted two joint complaints to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders (UNSR) concerning the arrest and continued pre-trial Israeli detention of two female Palestinian human rights defenders: **Ms Shireen Issawi** and **Ms Bushra al-Taweel**.

Ms Shireen Issawi and Ms Bushra al-Taweel are both devoted to promoting and protecting the human rights of Palestinian prisoners. Both their cases raise serious concerns that Palestinian human rights defenders are being targeted by Israeli authorities for **arbitrary arrest and detention** due to peacefully and legitimately exercising their fundamental right to freedom of expression on the significant human rights issue of Palestinian prisoner conditions and rights.

Ms Shireen Issawi is a human rights lawyer and prominent advocate for Palestinian prisoner rights from occupied East Jerusalem who has participated in monitoring, documenting and advocacy on human rights violations committed by Israeli authorities against Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons.

Ms Issawi was arrested by Israeli authorities on 6 March 2014 and has since been held continuously in pre-trial Israeli detention. She has been charged with three offences relating to cooperating with actors working against the state of Israel. The trial date for Ms Issawi has been set for three days of hearings on 23 October 2014, 28 October 2014 and 30 October 2014.

LPHR and Addameer have expressed serious concerns in their joint complaint submission that Ms Issawi has been specifically targeted for arbitrary arrest and continuous pre-trial detention because of her prominent human rights advocacy on behalf of Palestinian prisoners. We call for the evidence relied upon by the Israeli authorities to substantiate the charges against Ms Issawi be subjected to rigorous examination and testing, in accordance with Israel's duty under international human rights law to protect Ms Issawi's right to a fair hearing.

Ms Bushra al-Taweel is a 21 year old female student and journalist who performs voluntary work for the Aneen Al-Qaid news organization which publishes information about Palestinian prisoner issues. She also performs voluntary work for the Prisoners Club and is a participant in a European Union sponsored project on documenting human rights violations specifically relating to human rights defenders.

Ms al-Taweel was arrested by Israeli military authorities on 2 July 2014 and has since been held continuously in Israeli military detention. She is being detained under Article 186 of Israeli Military Order 1651, which enables a special Israeli military committee to cancel a reduced



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sentence that was previously awarded to a prisoner and to require them to serve the remainder of that sentence. A decision made under Article 186 of Military Order 1651 is made on the basis of secret evidence which is not disclosed to the prisoner or his/her lawyer. Ms al-Taweel is still awaiting a date for a court hearing to take place to review the decision to detain her under Article 186 of Military Order 1651.

LPHR and Addameer have expressed serious concerns in their joint complaint submission that Article 186 of Military Order 1651 is impermissibly being used against Ms al-Taweel as grounds to arbitrarily re-arrest and detain her. We further take the firm position that as a result of the unfair Article 186 procedure, Ms al-Taweel's right to a fair hearing will be unlawfully impaired. This is because the evidence being relied upon by Israeli military authorities to detain Ms al-Taweel is not available to her or to her lawyer, prohibiting her from preparing an effective defence. It is a basic principle of a fair hearing under international human rights law that a person must know the evidence against him/her.

Ms Shireen Issawi's and Ms Bushra al-Taweel's peaceful work to promote, protect and realise human rights and fundamental freedoms means they are entitled to the human rights protections outlined in the **United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders**.

LPHR and Addameer have therefore requested in their complaint that the UNSR undertake an urgent examination into both these significant cases and take appropriate action through urgent contact with the government of Israel to ensure that Ms Shireen Issawi's and Ms Bushra al-Taweel's treatment by Israeli authorities is consistent with fundamental rights guarantees contained within international human rights law.

LPHR and Addameer have further requested that the UNSR considers liaising with other appropriate United Nations Special Rapporteurs and human rights organisations in undertaking an investigation into the Israeli military authorities use of Article 186 of Military Order 1651. We request that the outcome of this investigation and any recommendations about bringing Article 186 of Military Order 1651 into compliance with international human rights law should be communicated to the state of Israel and subsequently followed-up.

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About Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR)

[LPHR](#) is a lawyer-based legal charity in the United Kingdom that works on legal projects aimed at protecting and advancing Palestinian human rights.

About Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer)

[Addameer](#) is a Palestinian non-governmental, civil institution that works to support Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli and Palestinian prisons.