

# Reconsider charges against Palestinian human rights defender, UN experts urge Israel

7 July 2017 – Voicing concern over the reactivation of charges – some of which date back a number of years – against a Palestinian human rights defender, two independent United Nations experts have called on Israel to strictly abide by international law in its dealings with rights defenders.

“On the information available to us, many of the charges against [Issa] Amro appear to be directed squarely at his lawful right to peacefully protest against the 50-year-old Israeli occupation,” said the Special Rapporteur [on the occupied Palestinian territories](#), Michael Lynk, and the Special Rapporteur [on human rights defenders](#), Michel Forst, in a [news release](#) today.

“If the Israeli military court convicts Mr. Amro on any of the charges against him, the convictions will be stained by reasonable doubts about the system’s ability to ensure justice,” they added.

According to the experts, the Israeli military court system – which all Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to – has a conviction rate above 99 per cent, which raises serious concerns about the system meeting many of the international standards of due process required under international human rights and humanitarian law. Further, stating that Palestinian human rights defenders, including Mr. Amro, have faced a long pattern of harassment, intimidation, discriminatory treatment and physical interference from Israeli military and settler groups, the two experts underscored that the non-violent work of human rights defenders must not be disrupted and attacked by the authorities, even under a military occupation.

“Their rights to freedom of expression and assembly must be respected and protected,” they stressed.

According to the news release, Mr. Amro and Youth Against Settlements have campaigned against the Israeli military’s shutdown of the once-thriving Palestinian neighbourhood around Shuhada Street in Hebron, and against illegal Israeli settlements in and near the city.

Their activities have included running a community centre, organizing protest marches and opposing the many restrictions placed by the military on daily Palestinian life, it added.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN [Human Rights Council](#) to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.