



For Immediate Release:

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Calls on the Palestinian Authority for the Immediate Release of Peace Activist Issa Amro

Washington, D.C. - September 8, 2017 - Palestinian human rights activist Issa Amro was detained Monday, September 4, 2017, by the security forces of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Amro, of the West Bank town of Hebron, had publicly voiced criticism of the PA for having detained Ayman Qawasmeh. Qawasmeh, a Palestinian journalist, had criticized the Authority and called for PA leader Mahmoud Abbas to resign. In two Facebook posts from Sunday, September 3, Amro expressed support for Qawasmeh and condemned his detention.

On Tuesday, Amro began a hunger strike to protest his detention, where he claims to have been subjected to filthy conditions as well as physical violence and threats.

It has been four days since Amro's initial detainment. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) has been waiting in anticipation for an announcement regarding Amro's release. On Thursday, Amro's attorney announced that a Palestinian court had extended Amro's detention for four days. The court proceedings also revealed that Amro would be charged with "cyber crimes."

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) calls on the Palestinian Authority for the Immediate Release of Peace Activist Issa Amro.

We applaud the nine members of Congress who have also called on the PA for Amro's immediate release. In a letter dated September 6, 2017, members of Congress wrote: "Mr. Amro's detention is extremely concerning as the United States continues discussion with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to seek a two state solution. They described the charges against Amro as "baseless" and his detention as "unjust."

Amnesty International called the arrest "outrageous," while the UN OHCHR similarly expressed concern and urged his release. The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights called for both Amro and Qawasmeh to be released from custody.

Amro, 35, founded the group Youth Against Settlements. He also faces charges in the Israeli military court system, accused of conducting illegal protests and obstructing soldiers' duties. According to Haaretz, Amro's charges include "spitting at a settler, obstructing soldiers and insulting them, and entering closed military zones." His trial is scheduled to resume in October.

The detention of Amro and Qawasmeh takes place in a context of increasing authoritarianism by Abbas' PA.

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Formed in 1984, [Churches for Middle East Peace](#) is a [coalition of 27 national church denominations and organizations](#), including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions. It works to encourage U.S. government policies that actively promote a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ensuring security, human rights and religious freedom for all people of the region. [Click here to unsubscribe](#).

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