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Press Statement

"There is no Peace with Human Rights Violations"

Abdallah Abu Rahmah from Bilin was arrested a year ago, on the International Day of Human Rights, December 10, 2009. The International League for Human Rights (ILHR) demands the immediate release of human rights defender, Abu Rahmah, and of all non-violent Palestinian prisoners!

One year earlier, the ILHR awarded its annual Carl von Ossietzky Medal, commemorating the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, to the "Popular Committee" in Bilin (Palestine) and the "Anarchists Against the Wall" (Israel). The ILHR explained: "They are an example of non-violent resistance to the inhumane separation wall and for a culture permitting a common future and coexistence in Israel and Palestine in freedom and peace." In his acceptance speech in Berlin, Abdallah Abu Rahmah, the coordinator of the Popular Committee in Bilin emphasized:

"The oppression that the Israeli occupation is inflicting on our people, including killings and arrests, stands in the way to achieve peace in our region. There is no peace with human rights violations."

This basic insight is shared by more and more people throughout the world. The international League for Human Rights underlines what this defender of human rights has expressed. The ILHR condemns that much more adamantly the arrest of Abdallah Abu Rahmah by the Israeli army one year later, on December 10, 2009 – precisely on the International Day of Human Rights. Thousands spontaneously joined the ILHR's appeal for Abu Rahmah's release.

Arresting Abdallah Abu Rahmah is already in violation of all laws and even more so, sentencing him to twelve months prison by a military court in October 2010. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Lady Ashton, has taken a clear position: "The possible imprisonment of Mr Abu Rahmah is intended to prevent him and other Palestinians from exercising their legitimate right to protest against the existence of the separation barriers in a non-violent manner."

That the Israeli army robbed this non-violent activist of his freedom precisely on the International Day of Human Rights is seen by ILHR as another deliberate demonstration of the Israeli army's disdain for the internationally embedded human rights and its culture. This deprivation of liberty and brazen lack of respect, particularly in regards to this internationally renowned human rights defender, Abdallah Abu Rahmah, has but one objective: it is the background music to a systematic attempt to break the non-violent Palestinian resistance.

German diplomats attended the recent – December 6, 2010 – appeal hearings in Abdallah Abu Rahmah's case, along with numerous other representatives of the EU and EU member states. This was not the first time that diplomats have demonstrated their support for civil society movements of non-violent Palestinian resistance. The hearing was centered on whether to aggravate Abdallah Abu Rahmah's already harsh sentence.

The ILHR is still – and especially now – waiting for a public statement of the German government. We are appealing to the German Chancellor and the German Foreign Minister to refrain from making some ambiguous statement of diplomacy, but to speak out clearly, facing television cameras and demand that the Israeli government free all non-violent Palestinian prisoners and, as a first step, immediately release Abdallah Abu Rahmah from prison.