

# From The Freedom Theatre in Jenin refugee camp

22 December, 2011

Last night the Israeli army invaded Jenin refugee camp for the second night in a row. They arrested another three members of The Freedom Theatre. This time Adnan Nagnaghiye, our stage manager, Bilal Saadi, the chairperson, and Faisal Abu Alheja, acting instructor and assistant producer.

Faisal yesterday performed the stories of arrests. (Picture)

"Through the performance today, people were able to talk about their experiences at the hands of the Israeli army. The event also helped to educate others about the unjust and inhumane practices of the Israeli military here in Jenin refugee camp." Faisal Abu Alheja, Actor at The Freedom Theatre, now in Israeli prison.

In their operations the Israeli army breaks down the doors of the houses they enter, at times they turn the house upside-down, they blindfold and handcuff innocent people that are not suspected or accused of any crime. They beat, verbally insult and lock them in prison cells. Reports from those arrested yesterday speak of inhumane treatment that amount to torture.

The systematized attacks by the Israeli army on The Freedom Theatre and its employees seriously damage the theatre's ability to operate as a safe place for children and youth.

To bring attention to Israel's systematized practice of military rule and arbitrary arrests, The Freedom Theatre held a street performance at 2 pm yesterday in Jenin refugee camp. Actors used Playback Theatre\* to enact the accounts of those who were impacted by the recent invasions and harassment. The performance was attended by children, youth and adults from the camp as well as internationals.

"Today's event gave me a chance to tell my story. Having others listen to my experience helped me feel connected to my community. It also helped to know that my story was being heard by an international audience." Kamal Abu Awad. Student in The Freedom Theatre, resident of Jenin refugee camp and a recently released detainee. In this event, stories were told by people who were recently arrested, tortured and harassed by the Israeli military. Other residents of Jenin refugee camp also shared their thoughts and feelings about Israeli military violence and the increasing number of arbitrary arrests that have occurred over the past months.

The Freedom Theatre will stage a second event on Wednesday, December 28th at 2pm to protest against the further arrests and nightly raids taking place in Jenin Refugee Camp.

The people of Jenin refugee camp are using theatre in a highly innovative way to communicate their story and resist the intimidation of the Israeli military apparatus. Today's action communicated to the Israeli army that their egregious behavior will be closely observed, monitored and publicized.

For further information call:

Rawand Arqawi, Press Officer on [+972\(0\)599971070](tel:+972(0)599971070)

Or e-mail The Freedom Theatre at [info@thefreedomtheatre.org](mailto:info@thefreedomtheatre.org)

\*Playback Theatre is an interactive theatre approach used in over 50 countries as a tool for community building and community dialogue. In a Playback Theatre performance, audience members volunteer life experiences and watch as a team of actors and musicians transform these accounts into improvised theater pieces.