



**Middle
East
Studies
Association**
of North America, Inc.

1957 E Street NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20052

Phone 520-333-2577

Fax 520-207-3166

caf@mesana.org

mesana.org



21 September 2020

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Fax: +972-2-5664838

pm_eng@pmo.gov.il

Minister of Higher Education Ze'ev Elkin

Fax: +972-2-2649438

zelkin@knesset.gov.il

Minister of Justice Avi Nissenkorn

Fax: +972-2-6285438

mancal@justice.gov.il

Israeli Defense Forces, Central Command

Pniot.tzibur.il@gmail.com

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

We write to you on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our outrage about the continued detention of Imad Barghouthi, Professor of Theoretical Space Plasma Physics at Al-Quds University, and the order to place him under administrative detention until 15 November 2020. We demand an end to the Israeli security forces' practice of arbitrary detention and imprisonment of Palestinian faculty and students, and the immediate release of Professor Imad Barghouti.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has over 2,500 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

We wrote to you on [30 July 2020](#) to protest the arrest of Professor Barghouthi. He is a former National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) employee, an internationally renowned scientist and a pillar of Al-Quds University's academic community. On 16 July, Israeli military forces arrested Professor Barghouthi at a military checkpoint outside of Anata while he was travelling from the university campus to his home in Ramallah. After two weeks of being held without charges, Professor Barghouthi was charged with crimes concerning Facebook posts. Despite the order of an Israeli judge to release him on bail, Professor Barghouthi remains imprisoned after Israeli officials placed him under administrative detention.

As mentioned in our previous letter, this is the third instance of the Israeli authorities' arrest and administrative detention of Professor Barghouti. After his detention on 6 December 2014, we wrote to you on [14 January 2015](#) and called on you to release him. He was arrested again on 24 April 2016 and held under administrative detention. We wrote to you on [16 May 2016](#) and again on [8 June 2016](#), calling for his release.

Professor Barghouthi is one of [more than 350 Palestinians](#) currently held under administrative detention in Israeli prisons. This practice allows Israeli authorities to hold Palestinians without being charged, tried or convicted, based on classified evidence that is not revealed to them, and for an indefinite period (as the six-month period set in the regulations is regularly extended). This practice has been condemned by the United Nations and is in direct violation of Article 14 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#).

Thus, in this most recent instance concerning Professor Barghouthi, as in the other cases, Israel's use of these emergency regulations to place Palestinians under administrative detention violates their basic rights, as well as international law more broadly. It contradicts Israel's duty as an occupying power, based on the Fourth Geneva Convention, to inform individuals of the reason for their arrest, as well as to facilitate a speedy and fair trial. Furthermore, Barghouthi's administrative detention is a violation of his academic freedom and freedom of expression; it is, as well, an attack on Palestinians' right to both engage in and enjoy access to scientific research, protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Israel is a signatory. We demand Professor Barghouthi's immediate release and the cessation of the Israeli policy of arbitrary arrests and administrative detention targeting Palestinian faculty and students.

We await your response.

Sincerely,



Dina Rizk Khoury
MESA President
Professor, George Washington University



Laurie Brand
Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom
Professor, University of Southern California

cc:

Minister of the Interior Aryeh Machluf Deri
Minister of Education Yoav Galant
Ambassador David Melech Friedman
Brigadier-General Rasan Alian, Head of Civil Administration in the West Bank,
Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories
European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP)



Re: Administrative Detention of Imad Barghouthi of al-Quds University

21 September 2020

Page 3

Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the
Palestinian territories

James Heenan, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Ramallah

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, MENA section

Noha Bawazir, Head of Office and UNESCO Representative, UNESCO Liaison
Office, Ramallah

Palestinian delegation to UNESCO

Viktor Almqvist, Press Officer - Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and
Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) - European Parliament