

Subject: PCHR Condemns Preventing a Human Rights Activist by IOF from Traveling to the West Bank
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PCHR
Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

Press Release



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PCHR Condemns Preventing a Human Rights Activist by IOF from Traveling to the West Bank

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) prevented Director of PCHR Field Work Ibtissam Zaqout “al-‘Aaidi”, 44, from traveling to the West Bank through *Beit Hanoun* (Erez) crossing, and holding her for nearly 9 hours even though she has a valid permit issued by IOF. PCHR strongly condemns this measure which has come in the context of collective punishments against civilians, including human rights defenders.

Al ‘Aaidi went to Erez crossing at approximately 08:30 on Wednesday, 7 March 2007, to Erez crossing to travel to the West Bank in response to an invitation from the Swedish Kvinna Till Kvinna. The Palestinian civil liaison informed her that IOF had issued a permit for her. At approximately 09:00, she entered the crossing. There, IOF soldiers took her identity card and ordered her to wait for 10 minutes to

be able to pass through. However, 8 hours passed without any explanation for blocking her from traveling. During this period, IOF soldiers treated her as a detainee. At approximately 17:30, when no one was still at the crossing except for her, IOF soldiers gave her the identity card and the permit and ordered her to travel back to Gaza .

According to al-‘Aaidi, IOF prevented many Palestinians from traveling through the crossing although they have valid permits. Others were allowed to pass through the crossing after they had been interrogated by IOF intelligence officers.

This measure came in the context of collective punishment practiced by IOF against Palestinian civilians, including imposing restrictions on the freedom of movement and denial of travel between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank . IOF have complete control over *Beit Hanoun* (Erez) crossing. They have closed it, allowing only diplomats, VIPs, a staff members of international organizations, and a limited number of patients and traders to travel through it. In a few cases, IOF allow Palestinians to travel from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank upon invitations from international organizations.

PCHR strongly condemns such arbitrary measures, and calls upon the international community, particularly the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to intervene to stop grave breaches of the Convention perpetrated by IOF against Palestinian civilians, and to ensure Israel ’s respect for the Convention.

Public Document

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