

PCHR

Palestinian Centre for Human Rights Press Release

Ref: 77/2010

Date: 29 August 2010

Time: 11:00 GMT

PCHR Condemns Prevention of Delivering Religious Speeches and Detention of a Number of Persons After Attacking Them in Hebron

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) condemns the security services' prevention of delivering a religious speech by Nayef Mahmoud al-Rjoub, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) for the Change and Reform Bloc, in Dura Mosque in Hebron, in addition to attacking number of worshipers and arresting dozens of them. PCHR calls upon the government in Ramallah to respect the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which is guaranteed under the Palestinian Basic Law and international human rights standards, and to stop arbitrary arrests.



According to investigations conducted by PCHR, the testimony of PLC Member Nayef al-Rjoub and those of a number of eyewitnesses, at approximately 10:30 on Friday, 27 August 2010, dozens of Palestinian policemen, wearing civilian clothes and some of them carrying guns, entered Dura mosque in the center of Dura town and spread among the worshipers. Four policemen moved towards PLC Member Nayef al-Rjoub and requested him to stop the religious lesson or Friday sermon. Policemen clashed with the supporters of PLC Member Nayef al-Rjoub and the worshipers. In the meanwhile, a heavily armed police force broke into the mosque, and the masked policemen started beating al-Rjoub's supporters and those who resisted them by clubs.

Al-Rjoub and many worshipers left the mosque heading to Hanina Street in the south of the town, and moving to "Mojahed" mosque, which is 400 meters away from the first one. After they had entered the said mosque, the police force followed them to prevent al-Rjoub again from delivering the sermon, and cut off the loudspeakers' cables.

Following the Friday prayer, Palestinian policemen launched a large-scale arrest campaign through house raids targeting supporters and members of (Hamas) movement. The majority of them included the ones gathered in the two mosques. Approximately 45 persons, from Dura town and its environs, were arrested; some of them are supporters and relatives of al-Rajoub. Only 5 of those detainees have been released so far.

PCHR condemns restrictions imposed on delivering sermons and religious speeches and arresting worshipers, which are part of measures followed to restrict the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and:

1. Calls the government in Ramallah to respect the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to peaceful assembly, and not to intervene by preventing sermons;
2. Emphasizes that the right to freedom of opinion and expression is guaranteed under Palestinian Basic Law and international human rights standards;
3. Reminds of the ruling issued by the Palestinian Supreme Court of Justice on 20 February 1999, which considers political detention illegal and demands all executive bodies respect the Court ruling and stop practicing political detention; and
4. Calls for the immediate release of all political detainees who are held by Palestinian security services in the West Bank.

Public Document

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