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Media Release

## **Public sector unionists arrested in Palestine - « We call for their immediate release »**

vendredi 21 novembre 2014, par [DWRC](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 9 novembre 2014).

**DWRC denounces violations of freedom of association and the right to organize of public sector employees by the Palestinian Authority, and calls for international solidarity.**

Media Release, 9 November 2014

The Democracy and Workers' Rights Center in Palestine condemns the detention of representatives of the Union of Public Employees, including its president and vice-president, Bassam Zakarneh, and Moein Ansawi, and the closure of the Union of Public Employees office in Ramallah following a general strike called for by the union last Thursday. We call for the immediate release of all detained trade union representatives and activists, and the reopening of the office of the Union of Public Employees.

On Thursday 6/11/2014, the Palestinian police arrested the president of the Union of Public Employees, Bassam Zakarneh, and the Union's vice-president, Moein Ansawi, in Ramallah. On 7/11/2014, the Palestinian president's office issued a statement declaring that the Union of Public Employee is not a "legal entity", and the office of the Union of Public Employees in Al-Irsal Street in Ramallah was sealed. An additional number of representatives of the Union of Public Employees have been detained over the last two days.

The Democracy and Workers' Rights Center in Palestine is extremely concerned by these developments, which amount to serious violations of freedom of association and the right to organize of Palestinian public sector employees. They intervene after the Union of Public Employees has been escalating its protest actions and activities to defend the rights of public employees, and obtain unpaid allowances and other benefits. The Union of Public Employees has been representing governmental employees in the West Bank since 2006, and union representatives have been elected by the employees of ministries and official institutions on a regular basis. Furthermore, it has conducted regular dialogue with the Palestinian Authority on the subject of public employees' rights, and has negotiated several agreements with various Palestinian governments since its establishment.

Freedom of association and the right to organize is a fundamental human right and liberty that must be upheld and protected under all circumstances. Therefore, we call on all trade unions, labor rights and human rights organizations worldwide, to intercede with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian officials for the immediate release of detained representatives of the Union of Public Employees, including its president and vice-president Bassam Zakarneh and Moein Ansawi, for the reopening of the office of the Union of Public Employees, and for guaranteeing freedom of association and the right to organize for all public sector employees of the Palestinian National

Authority.

*Please address your letters to :*

President Mahmoud Abbas (through president's chief of staff, D<sup>r</sup>. Hussein Al-Araj :  
halaraj president.ps, Fax : +970 2 2969740)

D<sup>r</sup>. Rami Al-Hamdallah, Prime Minister : rhamdallah pmo.pna.ps, Fax : +970 2 2968981 or +970 2  
2968983

PLC member Azzam Al-Ahmad, head of Fatah parliamentary bloc, Fax : +970 2 2957198

*For any inquiries and further information, please contact DWRC at [extr dwrc.org](http://extr.dwrc.org)*

**Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre (DWRC), Palestine**

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\* <http://dwrc.org/pages.php?id=74>