

# **Palestine/Israel: Military court seeks to hide Ahed Tamimi's trial from public view as global celebrities express solidarity**

Friday 16 February 2018, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 13 February 2018).



Palestinian teen activist Ahed Tamimi, her imprisoned mother Nariman and her cousin Nour were brought before the Israeli Ofer military court on 13 February, as a military court judge ordered Ahed's hearings closed in an attempt to blunt international attention and outrage over the arrest, military trial and imprisonment of Ahed and fellow Palestinian children. Ahed is one of over 350 Palestinian children currently imprisoned by the Israeli occupation.

The next hearing in Ahed, Nariman and Nour's case was set for 11 March. The preliminary hearing today began with the order by the military judge, Lt. General Menachem Liberman, who ordered journalists out of the courtroom and said that the further hearings in Ahed's case would take place behind closed doors because of Ahed's right to privacy as a minor. This took place despite the objections of defense lawyer Gaby Lasky, who emphasized that Ahed and her parents waive this right as they believe that it is critical to keep public exposure on the violation of Palestinian children's rights.

It is particularly ironic given the public media campaign conducted against Ahed by Israeli occupation media and the aggressive statements of politicians like far-right Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who has called for Ahed to be imprisoned for the rest of her life for slapping an occupation soldier invading her family's land and home in the Palestinian village of Nabi Saleh. The military court's concern for Ahed's rights, however, seemingly does not extend to ending her detention or implementing internationally recognized children's rights in Ahed's case or that of her fellow imprisoned Palestinian children.

Lasky and other observers noted that the declaration of a closed trial in Ahed's case is clearly an attempt to suppress international media interest in the case. Ahed's case has drawn attention not only from global media but from popular movements; hundreds of protests have been organized around the world to demand her release and that of all Palestinian prisoners.

The defense also submitted a petition to dismiss the case before trial, arguing that the military courts are invalid and have no legitimate authority as they are based on an illegitimate and unlawful colonial occupation. In addition, the defense stated that the prosecution is unlawful because it is part of separate and unequal legal systems in the occupied Palestinian West Bank – one for Israeli settlers in illegal colonies – with civil rights and protections – and the other, a military court system

for the indigenous Palestinian people.

The hearing comes as Ahed and Nariman near the end of their second month in Israeli prison. Ahed was seized in a pre-dawn raid on the family home on 19 December, and her mother arrested hours later when going to see her daughter at military police station. Ahed is facing 12 charges in the military court, all of them based on her activity in protesting and resisting the occupation of Palestine and in particular, her family's village, Nabi Saleh. The village of 600 has been home to a strong protest movement for years, as its spring and agricultural lands have been seized and attacked by the illegal Israeli colonial settlement of Halamish.

Ahed's mother livestreamed her daughter's confrontation of the heavily armed occupation soldiers on 15 December 2017, shortly after the family learned that their cousin Mohammed, 15, had been shot in the face and severely injured by a rubber-coated metal bullet. Ahed and her cousin Nour confronted the soldiers, demanding they leave the family's land as the occupation forces instead attempted to use the family's high ground to look down on and suppress a demonstration below. Ahed's slap of the soldier became a viral social media video, a symbol of ongoing resistance to Palestinians - while Zionist media and politicians viewed it as unacceptable disobedience to occupation military might. Since her arrest several days later, Ahed's case has inspired global outrage and attention not only for her own case but that of the hundreds of other imprisoned Palestinian children and thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Ahed's family has called for a day of protest and action on 18 February, marking the two-month anniversary of Ahed and Nariman's arrest, and protests and actions are being organized in many cities to mark the day.

## Statement

*In addition, the action comes as dozens of Black celebrities, artists and influential figures signed a statement initiated by the Dream Defenders in support of Ahed Tamimi and her fellow Palestinian prisoners.*

Signers of the statement include Angela Davis, Michelle Alexander, Alice Walker, actors Jesse Williams, Rosario Dawson, Danny Glover and LisaGay Hamilton, sports star Michael Bennett, musicians Vic Mensa, Talib Kweli and Tom Morello and many others. The full statement is reprinted below:

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 15-year-old Mohammad Tamimi was shot in the face by an Israeli soldier while participating in an unarmed protest of Trump's Jerusalem declaration. Just minutes later, his 16-year-old cousin Ahed rose up to protect her family's home after two armed soldiers invaded her yard. For over 50 years, the Israeli army has stationed itself on Palestinian land in order to enforce its violent military occupation of the West Bank. Ahed stood her ground and asked the soldiers to leave. When they refused and tried to use her property as a base from which to shoot at protesters, she slapped one of them.

Ahed was arrested a few days later in the middle of the night. Her cousin Noor and her mother Nariman were also arrested. All three have been indicted by Israel's military court, which has a 99.7% conviction rate and lacks basic fair trial protections. Ahed has been denied bail and her trial will begin February 12<sup>th</sup>. Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called for her release.

In the US, we know all too well what it's like to be oppressed simply because you exist, because you

refuse to give up your fight for freedom. Last year, a Dream Defenders delegation of artists traveled to Palestine to bear witness to life under Israel military occupation and met the Tamimi family in their village of Nabi Saleh. Songs and stories of struggle were shared, from the US to Palestine. The Tamimis spoke about their daily lives — the Israeli army patrolling and shooting into their streets as their children play, Israeli settlers stealing their water. The delegation learned that every year hundreds of Palestinian kids across the West Bank are arrested and detained by Israeli soldiers and police who kick, punch, and beat them. Torture is routinely used to get signed confessions from children, mainly on charges of stone throwing.

While our struggles may be unique, the parallels cannot be ignored. US police, ICE, border patrol and FBI train with Israeli soldiers, police, and border agents, utilizing similar repressive profiling tactics to target and harass our communities. Too many of our children quickly learn that they may be imprisoned or killed simply for who they are. From Trayvon Martin to Mohammed Abu Khdeir and Khalif Browder to Ahed Tamimi – racism, state violence and mass incarceration have robbed our people of their childhoods and their futures.

In a bold move to protect Palestinian children like Ahed from widespread abuse by Israeli forces, Rep. Betty McCollum of Minnesota introduced an unprecedented bill last November entitled: Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act. The bill has 22 co-sponsors and counting.

We the undersigned call on all US representatives to sign this bill and protect the lives and childhoods of Palestinian children.

The Tamimi family stands up to Israel's brutality because they believe Palestinians, like ALL people, should be free. Dream Defenders stands with them and all Palestinians in their righteous struggle. Now, and always, we commit to building a more just and loving world for us all.

#FreeAhed #nowaytotreatachild

#### SIGNATORIES

Danny Glover  
Jesse Williams  
Michelle Alexander  
Rosario Dawson  
Tom Morello  
Angela Davis  
Michael Bennett  
Alice Walker  
Vic Mensa  
Talib Kweli  
Angela Rye  
Cornel West  
Patrisse Cullors  
Marc Lamont Hill  
Alicia Garza  
Tunde Adebimpe  
Gary Clark Jr.  
LisaGay Hamilton  
Emory Douglas  
dream hampton  
Robin D.G. Kelley

B Mike  
Tef Poe  
Kam Franklin  
Michael McBride  
Jasiri X

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**P.S.**

\* Samidoun. 13 February 2018:

<http://samidoun.net/2018/02/military-court-seeks-to-hide-ahed-tamimis-trial-from-public-view-as-global-celebrities-express-solidarity/>

For videos and integrated links, see the original.