

8 February 2022

### **OPT/Israel: Israeli authorities issue an order of cessation of building operations and an order of self-demolition for two Youth of Sumud's facilities**

On 31 January, human rights defender and leader of 'Youth of Sumud' **Sami Huraini** was served with an order of cessation of building operations for the organisation's new headquarters in At-Tuwani, in Hebron, by the Israeli Civil Administration. An order of demolition within 96 hours was also issued against a smaller facility used by the organisation located on a piece of land belonging to the Huraini family in Sarura, South Hebron Hills.

[Sami Huraini](#) is a Palestinian human rights defender and a board member of the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC), a committee that opposes the extension of the illegal Israeli settlement through peaceful demonstrations. Sami Huraini is also a member of the grassroots initiative 'Youth of Sumud', which was established to peacefully resist the Israeli occupation and the illegal Israeli settlements in Southern Hebron. Sami Huraini has also been involved in protecting the Palestinian civilians from settlers attacks by escorting Palestinian children to schools and accompanying Palestinian farmers to their lands close to the green line. Sami Huraini, alongside his sister and woman human rights defender Sameeha Huraini, is the winner of the [2021 Front Line Defenders Award](#) for the Middle East and North Africa region.

On 31 January 2022, Sami Huraini was served with two official orders by the Israeli Civil Administration in Judea and Samaria regarding a new 'Youth of Sumud' headquarters that was being built in At-Tuwaini, in Hebron, and a facility used by the organisation located in Sarura, on a piece of land belonging to the Huraini family. An order of cessation of operations was issued against the first facility in At-Tuwaini to impede the constructions of further headquarter buildings. An order of self-demolition was also issued against a facility used by Youth of Sumud to be executed within a 96 hours time-frame. The short time-frame makes it extremely difficult for any legal challenge to be brought against orders of this nature.

On 1 February 2022, the organisation started an appeal process to stop the execution of the orders. Sami Huraini is being frequently harassed by both the Israeli settlers and Israeli authorities for his peaceful human rights work. His hometown in South Hebron, Tuwani, is a border village on the green line. As a result, his community is frequently subjected to harassment and attacks.

On 8 January 2021, Sami Huraini was arrested after participating in a peaceful demonstration against the violence exerted by the Israeli Army, particularly after Palestinian activist Harun Abu Aram was shot in the neck from point-blank range, which caused him quadriplegia, on 1 January 2021.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the increased targeted attacks against Palestinian human rights defenders for their peaceful human rights work. It also highlights the increased difficulty with which Palestinian human rights organisations operate within the Israeli legal system, which aims at restricting their peaceful and legitimate work.

#### **Front Line Defenders urges the Israeli authorities to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally withdraw the two orders issued against the facilities owned and used by Youth of Sumud;

2. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in OPT/Israel and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 5: *“For the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels: (a) To meet or assemble peacefully” (b) To form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups (c) To communicate with non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Anderson

Executive Director