



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

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22 October 2020

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

I write on behalf of the Academic Freedom Committee of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) to express our deep concern about the ongoing detention of Imad Barghouthi, Professor of Theoretical Space Plasma Physics at Al-Quds University, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Founded in 1973, BRISMES is the largest, national academic association in Europe focused on the study of the Middle East and North Africa. It is committed to supporting academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region both in the UK and globally.

Professor Imad Barghouthi was seized at an Israeli military checkpoint in occupied Palestine on 16 July 2020, on his way home from the university. Two weeks later, he was charged in an Israeli military court for 'incitement' in relation to a post on Facebook. Following thousands of demands from across the world that that this internationally renowned scientist, father of five and grandfather of one be freed from prison, his lawyer successfully argued for his release on bail, which a judge granted on 2 September.

Despite being granted bail, Prof. Barghouthi was served with an administrative detention order until 15 November when he is scheduled to face a closed court. We are particularly concerned that Prof.



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Barghouthi is now being detained under administrative detention, due to its lack of public scrutiny and that it allows for detention of up to six months, but with the ability to be renewed indefinitely. Such a detention is contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention and Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We call upon you to immediately release Prof. Barghouthi and indeed all Palestinian university staff and students and others detained under administrative powers.

Yours sincerely,

Professor the Baroness Afshar OBE
President, BRISMES
on behalf of BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom