Affiliate , International Commission of Jurists - Geneva فرع لجنة الحقوقيين الدولية ، جنيف
تتمتع الحق بصفة استشارية لدى المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي في الأمم المتحدة
NGO in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

AL-HAQ

Urgent Appeal to UN Special Procedures for Immediate Action to Protect Mr Shawan Jabarin in light of Israel's Travel Ban and Persecution of Human Rights Defenders

19 November 2026

For the attention of:

— Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, Ms. Francesca Albanese;
— Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Andrea Bolaños Vargas;
— Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Mr. Leopoldo Maldonado Gutiérrez;
— Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises;
— Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Mr. Albert K. Barume;
— Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Ms. Cecilia M. Bailliet;
— Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Ms. Ashwini K.P.;
— Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Mr. Ben Saul;
— Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Mr. Bernard Duhaime.

Al-Haq, a Palestinian NGO based in the West Bank, is writing to urge UN Special Procedures to take immediate and decisive action in response to the latest escalation in Israel's arbitrary travel ban imposed on Mr Shawan Jabarin, General Director of the leading Palestinian human rights organisation Al-Haq. Israel's campaign of intimidation and persecution of Palestinian human rights defenders, is intended to quash the Palestinian human rights movement and prevent accountability.

On Friday, 13 November 2026, Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) stopped Mr Jabarin at the Allenby (Al-Karameh) Bridge as he attempted to travel from Palestine into Jordan. He was questioned about his intended travel and informed that he was prohibited from leaving. No adequate justification was provided for this restriction.

We recall that no Palestinian should be subject to arbitrary and racist domination by the IOF. As the International Court of Justice ruled in its Advisory Opinion on the *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East*

Jerusalem (19 July 2024), the State of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful, its conduct is in breach of the Palestinian right to self-determination, and is in violation of the prohibition of racial segregation and apartheid.

This latest measure banning the travel of Mr Shawan Jabarin is not an isolated incident. It forms part of a longstanding pattern of threats, intimidation, arbitrary restrictions and reprisals directed against Mr Jabarin because of his human rights work and Al-Haq's role in documenting and pursuing accountability for international crimes committed against the Palestinian people. In 2006, Israel imposed a travel ban on Mr Jabarin which remained in force for six years.[1] Mr. Jabarin was even denied travel to the Netherlands by Israel's Supreme Court, where he was going to accept the prestigious "Geuzenpenning Prize" for human rights, on behalf of Al-Haq.[2] The travel ban remained in force for six years, until it was temporarily lifted in 2012, subject to conditions. In 2016, he received death threats linked to Al-Haq's involvement in proceedings at the International Criminal Court,[3] and in 2022 he was threatened with arrest and imprisonment if he continued his advocacy.[4]

The current travel ban must therefore be understood in its wider context: an escalating assault on Palestinian civil society and an unprecedented crackdown on the freedom of human rights defenders to carry out their legitimate work. Furthermore, these reprisals are taking place against the backdrop of Israel's ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people, annexation of their homeland, and systematic, multi-layered attacks on international accountability efforts.

Israel's actions violate fundamental human rights

Israel, the Occupying Power, has significant obligations towards protected persons in territory it holds under its effective control, including obligations to apply human rights treaties to which it is a party, extraterritorially, as reiterated ad nauseam by UN treaty bodies. Clearly, Israel's overreach into the work of Palestinian human rights organisations and its current authoritarian travel ban violate the rights to freedom of movement and association under Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the right to freedom of expression under Article 19 of the ICCPR, as ratified by Israel in 1991.

Further, the travel ban unduly and directly interferes with Mr. Jabarin's right to work under Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Notably, the rights to

[1] Amnesty International: Travel ban violates rights of human rights defender – must be lifted (1 July 2028), https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/7263.html
[2] Front Line Defenders, Case History: Shawan Jabarin,(8 March 2016), https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/case-history-shawan-jabarin#case-update-id-1895
[3] ICC, Report on Preliminary Examination Activities 2016, https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/iccdocs/otp/161114-otp-rep-PE_ENG.pdf, para. 144.
[4] Al-Haq, Urgent Action Needed: General Director of Al-Haq Receives a Threatening Phone Call from Israeli Intelligence, the Shabak (21 August 2022), https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/20459.html

freedom of expression and assembly are similarly protected under Article 6 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and freedom of movement is implicitly expressed in the right of "unhindered access to and communication with international bodies" in Article 9(6).

These developments have taken place against the backdrop of further restrictions imposed by the U.S. administration on Al-Haq in September 2025, when the organisation was sanctioned due to its engagement with the International Criminal Court (ICC).[5]

Article II(f) of the Apartheid Convention of 1973 recognises as an element of the crime of apartheid the "[p]ersecution of organizations and persons, by depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms, because they oppose apartheid." The systematic targeting of Palestinian human rights defenders documenting evidence of Israel's genocidal acts is further indicative of a pattern of genocidal intent to destroy the Palestinian people, with impunity. Failure by Third States to uphold these legal obligations, and the values that underpin them, in the face of Israel's mounting attacks against Palestinian human rights defenders and civil society, emboldens further violations by Israel and reinforces a climate of impunity.

The newly imposed travel ban is a continuation of the grave and arbitrary persecution of Mr. Shawan Jabarin. It amounts to an unwarranted interference and silencing of the work of Palestinian human rights defenders, an attack on Palestinian civil society, and an erosion of the rule of law and democracy, which, in the words of former UN Special Rapporteur Ms. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, "is an attempt at civic death".[6]

The urgent need for concrete action

States must demonstrate that commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law is universal, consistent and unconditional. States must show that the protection of human rights defenders – whose work is indispensable to the functioning of democratic societies and the protection of the rule of law, will be upheld irrespective of the nationality of the perpetrator.

We therefore call on UN Special Procedures to act without delay, urging States to take the following concrete measures:

[5] UN OHCHR, UN experts dismayed by US sanctions against Palestinian human rights organisations (22 September 2025), https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/un-experts-dismayed-us-sanctions-against-palestinian-human-rights

[6] Transcript of the side event parallel to the 49th session of the Human Rights Council – "Protecting Palestinian Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society Organizations: Israel's Baseless Designation of the 6." Professor Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/2022/03/28/transcript-professor-fionnuala-n%C3%AD-aol%C3%A1in-unsr-1648446588.pdf

1. **Demand the immediate revocation of the travel ban imposed on Shawan Jabarin**: Publicly and directly call upon the Israeli authorities to lift this arbitrary restriction and guarantee his freedom of movement, personal safety and ability to continue his legitimate human rights work without threats, intimidation or reprisals;
2. **Raise this case urgently at the highest diplomatic and political levels**: Engage directly with the Israeli authorities to demand an immediate end to Israel's harassment and persecution of Mr Jabarin and other Palestinian human rights defenders;
3. **Demand the rescinding of the designations:** and measures used to outlaw, obstruct and criminalise the work of Palestinian human rights organisations, including Al-Haq, and ensure that their staff can carry out their legitimate activities without further unlawful interference;
4. **Terminate all military and trade agreements with Israel**: taking into consideration Israel's acts of genocide, apartheid, and ongoing denial of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people;
5. **Provide active and sustained political support to Palestinian human rights defenders**: Ensure meaningful protection, visibility and diplomatic support to organisations and individuals documenting violations of international law and pursuing accountability;
6. **Defend international accountability mechanisms**: Implement blocking legislation to publicly oppose sanctions, threats and other forms of intimidation directed against Al-Haq, the International Criminal Court, its officials and other individuals and organisations cooperating with international justice mechanisms.

States must ensure that those working to uphold international law are protected, not punished. We look forward to your response and to immediate and meaningful action.