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Press Release : Israel Revokes Zakaria Zubeidi's Amnesty

- To understand - Testimony -



Date de mise en ligne : Sunday 1 January 2012

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by: The Freedom Theatre date: 2011-12-31

The Freedom Theatre, Jenin Refugee Camp



The co-founder, avid supporter and mentor of The Freedom Theatre, Zakaria Zubeidi, has been told by the Palestinian Authority that his amnesty has been revoked by the Israeli authorities. Zubeidi is since the 29th December being held in arrest inside the Palestinian security headquarters, supposedly on orders from Israel. No reason has been given for this incarceration.

The amnesty agreement, granted in 2007 by the Israeli Prime Minister's office was in return for Zubeidi's ending of armed resistance. Zubeidi managed to escape numerous Israeli attempts to assassinate him during the Intifada. The amnesty agreement allowed him to remain safe inside the Palestinian Authority district of Jenin where the Israeli military would not seek to arrest or assassinate him.

From captivity Zubeidi said yesterday: "I can stay under interrogation for a year if that's what it takes but I just want to know that after that I will have my freedom."

After having been the leader of the armed resistance during the second Intifada, Zubeidi is since 2006 committed to cultural, non-violent resistance through theatre. He founded The Freedom Theatre together with Juliano Mer Khamis, who was assassinated earlier this year by unknown assailants. The Freedom Theatre is a cultural venue in Jenin Refugee Camp, which uses the arts as a form of resistance against oppression.

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Zubeidi has become one of the main advocates for non-violent resistance through the arts. As Zubeidi states: "We used armed resistance to represent our case in the Intifada, and then we decided to follow the PA's amnesty program and give up armed resistance, so then I continued my struggle against occupation through cultural resistance, and The Freedom Theatre is one of the institutions that have my full support."

No reason has been given for the sudden withdrawal of Zubeidi's amnesty. The Freedom Theatre regards this as yet another stage in the continued attacks and harassment that the theatre has been facing for several months; including attacks on the theatre and repeated nightly arrests of its members by the Israeli military.

▶ Whatever reasons the Israeli authorities will give for this cynical turn-around, it further jeopardizes the work of The Freedom Theatre in advocating non-violent resistance and puts Zakaria's safety at risk. Zakaria has always kept to the conditions of the amnesty whilst supporting a cultural intifada, says Jonatan Stanczak, the third co-founder of The Freedom Theatre.

The Freedom Theatre strongly condemns these actions and wishes to emphasize that Zubeidi's life is in real danger. The Freedom Theatre urges all its friends to contact the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli DCO in Jenin, the local Israeli representation and parliamentarians to voice opposition to this move and show support to Zakaria Zubeidi.

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