

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CAMPAIGN TO FREE AHMAD SA'ADAT AND ALL PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

WHEREAS, Israel currently holds over 11,000 Palestinians as political prisoners, including men, women and children, and one out of every four Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza has been subject to political arrest or detention, including 40% of Palestinian men from the West Bank and Gaza, and

WHEREAS, the arrest, detention and imprisonment of Palestinians is directed by a series of over 1500 Israeli military regulations that can be changed at any time by the regional military commander, and Palestinians arrested by the Israeli military are often relocated to Israeli military prisons outside the West Bank and Gaza, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and as the Israeli military continues to abduct Palestinians on a daily basis and imprison them in these military prisons, and

WHEREAS, Palestinians abducted by the Israeli military are subject to psychological and physical torture and abuse, especially during the period of interrogation, which can last for up to 180 days, including up to sixty days in which a Palestinian prisoner may not be seen by an attorney, and

WHEREAS, over half of all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees have not been tried, and

WHEREAS, nearly one thousand Palestinians are held in "administrative detention," a system of detention without charge or trial, that is indefinitely extensible for successive six-month periods, confronted only by secret evidence that is impossible to refute, and

WHEREAS, those Palestinian detainees that are tried are brought before an Israeli military court, in which Palestinians' rights to a fair trial are systematically violated, presided over by three judges, only one of which is required to have any legal training, and

WHEREAS, the Israeli military courts exist only as a function of the illegal military occupation, and thus can never provide a legitimate or fair trial to Palestinian political prisoners, and

WHEREAS, Palestinian national leaders, including Ahmad Sa'adat, General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Marwan Barghouti, Abdelaziz Dweik, Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and 39 other members of the PLC, are systematically targeted for political arrest and imprisonment, and

WHEREAS, the most basic of political activities, including simply being a member of most Palestinian political parties, are sufficient to serve as "charges" against Palestinian political prisoners and are met with substantial sentences, and

WHEREAS, Ahmad Sa'adat and five other Palestinian political prisoners were arrested by the Palestinian Authority in 2002, and were transferred to Jericho Prison under U.S. and British guard as a condition of a settlement between then PA President Yasser Arafat and Israel in May 2002, and

WHEREAS, during his time in PA prison, Sa'adat was never charged with any crime nor tried for any offense; his release was ordered by the Palestinian High Court, and supported by numerous international organizations, including Amnesty International, and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2006, the U.S. and British monitors at Jericho Prison left their posts, shortly before the inception of a ten-hour siege of the prison by the Israeli military that ended in the death of two Palestinians, the injury of twenty-three more, and the abduction of Ahmad Sa'adat and five other political prisoners from Jericho to Israeli military prisons, and

WHEREAS, Ahmad Sa'adat is currently facing trial for 19 political offenses, including membership in a prohibited organization, holding a post in a prohibited organization, and incitement, for giving a speech after

the Israeli assassination of his predecessor, Abu Ali Mustafa, in 2001, and his trial on these charges has been repeatedly delayed and postponed, often meeting for one day and not reconvening for periods of up to three months before continuing, and

WHEREAS, Ahmad Sa'adat and his attorneys refuse to recognize the authority of a military court that is an instrument of occupation, and

WHEREAS, political imprisonment has been one part of a deliberate strategy to deprive Palestinians of their leaders, educators, writers, journalists, clergy, unionists, and popular activists from all political orientations, as part of the dispossession and repression of the Palestinian Arab people in the interests of colonialism and occupation for over sixty years, including the denial of millions of Palestinian refugees' right to return home, and

WHEREAS, as Ahmad Sa'adat said in his statement to the court of January 14, 2007, " This trial cannot be separated from the process of the historical struggle in Palestine that continues today between the Zionist Movement and the Palestinian people, a struggle that centers on Palestinian land, history, civilization, culture and identity," and

WHEREAS, there is an international campaign to free Ahmad Sa'adat, and all Palestinian political prisoners, and as the National Lawyers Guild has a history of supporting political prisoners' struggles for justice and freedom, and

WHEREAS, the political imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians is made possible by the billions of dollars in economic and military support as well as the vast political and diplomatic support given to Israel by the United States,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Lawyers Guild calls for the immediate freedom of Ahmad Sa'adat and all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Lawyers Guild shall actively support the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat and all campaigns to free all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NLG shall endeavor to issue statements, hold events and otherwise publicize the cases of Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NLG shall endeavor to support the struggles and organizing of Palestinian political prisoners, and the work of activists and organizations on the ground working for justice and freedom for Palestinian political prisoners, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the NLG shall support, through events, statements, delegations and advocacy, the cause of freedom for which these thousands of prisoners are held - of self-determination, liberation and return for all Palestinians in exile and in all of historic Palestine.

Implementation by the NLG Middle East Subcommittee.

Submitted by the Steering Committee of the NLG Middle East Subcommittee, Charlotte Kates, charlotte.kates@gmail.com and Michael Shahin, mashahin@gmail.com