

Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi's trial adjourned, Israeli judge bars public



Tel Aviv, Feb 14 (RHC)-- The trial of Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi started in the Israeli military court at Ofer military prison in the West Bank on Tuesday. The teen activist faces 12 charges, some of which date back to 2016, and could be sentenced to 14 years in prison after the months-long trial is completed. Tamimi's trial was adjourned to next month after the short closed hearing on Tuesday.

The Israeli military targeted Tamimi after her mother, a prominent Palestinian rights activist, posted a video last December in which Ahed can be seen kicking and slapping a heavily armored Israeli soldier and threatening to hit another. She was then seized by the military during a night raid and has been in custody awaiting trial since then. Tamimi celebrated her 17th birthday last month in Israel's HaSharon Prison.

Human rights organizations, activists, and well-wishers have condemned her arrest and demanded her immediate release, but authorities have denied her the opportunity to access bail. Her family thinks the trial won't be a fair one since the military court is part of an integral occupation system by the Israeli state. On Tuesday morning, diplomats, rights researchers, and journalists along with dozens of other observers were ordered out of the court in a decision which judge Lieutenant Colonel Menachem Lieberman said

was for Tamimi's "protection."

Other members of the Tamimi family have also been arrested recently, including her cousins and her mother, Nariman. Her mother was accused of using Facebook "to incite others to commit terrorist attacks," according to the army.

Amnesty International has also called for Ahed's immediate release. Magdalena Mughrabi, Amnesty International's Deputy Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, has said that as an unarmed girl, "Ahed posed no threat during the altercation with the two Israeli soldiers who were heavily armed and wearing protective clothing," and that the Israeli authorities responded to her acts disproportionately.

"Israeli authorities have shown nothing but contempt for their obligations under international law to protect children," said Mughrabi. "Nothing she has done can justify her continued detention and the long, aggressive interrogation sessions she has been forced to endure during the first two weeks of her detention."

Ahed has appeared in other viral videos showing her defying Israeli soldiers as a small child. She was seen in a video threatening to punch a soldier when she was only 11 years old. She comes from Nabi Saleh, a village where protests and clashes are not uncommon, and her family is active in opposition to Israeli occupation.

Children and adults along in the West Bank are subject to military and police brutality and face military courts when arrested for both peaceful and violent protests. On the other hand, Israeli settlers in the West Bank that engage in violent activities are usually ignored or taken to a regular, civil court.

According to Amnesty International, there are currently about 350 Palestinian children in Israeli prisons and detention centers. The Israeli Defense Forces say that about 1,400 Palestinian children have been prosecuted in special juvenile military courts just in the past three years.

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