

Press Release

(Cairo & Beirut, 23 August 2017)

Jamil Dakwar chosen as Defender of Human Rights & Freedom of Expression in August 2017

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), Maharat Foundation, and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), in cooperation with IFEX, have chosen the prominent Palestinian human rights defender **Jamil Dakwar** as the Defender of Human Rights & Freedom of Expression for the month of August 2017, as part of the campaign entitled “Supporting Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Expression.”

Dakwar has been selected for his role in documenting cases of torture and cruel treatment against Palestinian prisoners in Israel. He has also worked to strengthen concern among legal and medical professionals as well as the general public towards the serious aspects and legal implications of torture crimes, while demanding the end of torture in Israeli prisons and accountability for victims.

Being a prominent human rights defender, Dakwar is the director of Human Rights Programs at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which monitors the United States government’s commitments to global human rights law and obligations. He leads a team of lawyers and advocates who use a human rights framework to complement existing ACLU legal and legislative advocacy primarily in the areas of counter-terrorism, racial justice, immigrants’ rights, women’s rights, and criminal and juvenile justice. Dakwar also serves as the ACLU’s main representative to the United Nations, and has testified before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, UN human rights bodies, and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), about human rights violations in the U.S.

Prior to joining the ACLU in 2004, Dakwar worked at Human Rights Watch, where he conducted research, advocated, and published reports on issues of torture and detention in Egypt, Morocco, Israel, and the occupied Palestinian territory. Before going to the U.S., he was a senior attorney with Adalah, a leading human rights group in Israel, where he filed and argued human rights cases before Israeli courts and advocated before international forums.

Dakwar graduated from Tel Aviv University and NYU School of Law. He is adjunct lecturer at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY).

Previously, the campaign Supporting Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Expression, launched in February 2017, chose prominent woman human rights defender and brave Tunisian journalist **Naziha Rjiba** (also known as “Om Zied”) to be the first nominee. She was followed by prominent human rights defender and blogger **Ahmed Mansoor** from the United Arab Emirates, who has been arbitrarily detained since March, to be the campaign’s human rights defender of the month of March. Then came human rights lawyer **Gamal Eid** from Egypt, named activist of the month of April, followed by rights defender **Hanaa Edwar** from Iraq, selected to be the campaign’s rights defender of the month of May. The three journalists of the Omani newspaper “Azamn”, **Ibrahim Al-Maamari, Yousef Al-Haj, and Zaher Al-Abri**, were named defenders of human rights and freedom of expression for the month of June, and were followed by the Moroccan journalist **Ali Anouzlat** to be the campaign’s nominee of July.

For more information about the campaign, please visit the websites of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) at <http://anhri.net/?lang=en>, Maharat News at www.maharat-news.com, and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights at <http://www.gc4hr.org>.