



27 February 2012

Dear friends and colleagues,

I am writing to convey my deepest gratitude for the support and tireless efforts of the members of Amnesty International who have acted to put pressure on the Israeli authorities and in so doing have helped me to obtain a permit to travel to Geneva to meet the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression.

I have been reading with great care all of the letters from Amnesty members all over the world sent on my behalf. Words cannot describe my appreciation for your goodwill and humanity. I have been deeply humbled by all your hard work and your messages of support. Unfortunately, my work at Al-Haq has left me with too little time to respond to them all.

Now that the Israeli High Court has decided to allow me to leave the country and I prepare myself to depart to Geneva, I have many conflicting thoughts and emotions running through my mind. I am happy because I, albeit temporarily, have regained my freedom to travel, however, I am dismayed because of the thought that many others continue to have their liberties crushed.

This latest decision to allow me just one chance to travel has reinforced my conviction that liberty should be held as inviolable and deepened my resolve to defend the liberty of others. Your support has taught me that there will always be individuals who consistently show concern for the suffering of others and are prepared to take action to help them. This really touches my heart and makes me recall the words of the great Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish:

As you prepare your breakfast – think of others.

Don't forget to feed the pigeons.

As you conduct your wars – think of others.

Don't forget those who want peace.

As you pay your water bill – think of others.

Think of those who only have clouds to drink from.

As you go home, your own home – think of others – don't forget those who live in tents.

As you sleep and count the planets, think of others – there are people who have no place to sleep.

As you liberate yourself with metaphors think of others – those who have lost their right to speak.


And as you think of distant others – think of yourself and say "I wish I were a candle in the darkness."

Without exaggeration this is what you have done for me.

I am aware that human rights activists have to pay a heavy price for their work under regimes that do not respect human rights. Their rights, as human rights activists and as human beings, come under constant assault. Patience is required as a core attribute, together with the belief that at the end of the dark tunnel there is always light. Therefore, we must not give up our work. As such, I humbly ask you to keep up the good work that has proven so fruitful on this occasion. For my part, I promise to continue my defence of human rights and to continue to believe in the common humanity of the people of world.

Personally, I shall remain deeply indebted for your support. I truly feel that I am fortunate to have you beside me at this time. I am writing to you because my suffering is shared by all Palestinian people who remain deprived of their right to freedom of movement – whether inside or outside their country. This is but one small manifestation of how military occupation affects the daily lives of Palestinians. However, the success you have achieved makes me and surely many others more determined and committed to defend all our rights.

I remain,



Shawan Jabarin

General Director
Al-Haq

