

Military Advocate General
Brig. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi
Email: Pazar@idf.il

Dear Brig. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi,

*I am writing you today to express my grave concern over the enforced disappearance of **Haitham Abdelwahed**, (25) and **Nidal al-Waheidi** (31), two journalists from the occupied Gaza Strip whose whereabouts have remained unknown since 7 October 2023. The detention of the two journalists was widely documented on that day as they were reporting from Beit Hanoun/Erez crossing. On 22 October and 2 November, six human rights organizations based in Israel filed two urgent petitions before the Israeli Supreme Court requesting the disclosure of the whereabouts of hundreds of Palestinians from the occupied Gaza Strip detained in Israel, including the two journalists, the legal grounds for their detention and calling for the release of those unlawfully detained. Two-and-a-half months since the two went missing while on duty, their families, colleagues and friends, most of whom live in the besieged Gaza Strip amidst relentless Israeli bombardment and frequent communication blackouts, have received no information about them from the Israeli authorities, not even confirmation that they are still alive.*

The families' fears have been exacerbated by the Israeli army's confirmation in November that two workers from the Gaza Strip had died while in the custody of the Israeli military. As recently as 18 December, the Israeli army told Israeli daily, Haaretz that a "number of" detainees from the Gaza Strip died in custody at the military detention facilities in the Beersheba Airfield, also known as Sdeh Teyman, where hundreds of Palestinians from Gaza are held in conditions that violate the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment.

In light of the harrowing testimonies and accounts of torture and other ill-treatment shared by released detainees and the uncertainty and anguish that the families of Nidal al-Waheidi and Haitham Abdelwahed have been going through, we urge you to immediately disclose the whereabouts of Nidal al-Waheidi and Haitham Abdelwahed, detail the legal grounds for their detention, ensure their humane treatment, including access to medical services and protection from torture and other ill-treatment, and grant them access to the lawyers appointed by their families. Unless they are charged promptly with a recognizable criminal offence and granted a fair trial in accordance with international standards, they must be immediately released.

Yours sincerely,