

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

SHATHA ODEH ABU FANNOUNEH

شذى عودة أبو فنونة

At liberty **Palestine**

Director of a Palestinian health organization, arrested at her home in Ramallah in July 2021 and held in Israeli prisons under charges linked to her work. A military court sentenced her in May 2022 to 16 months in prison; she was released early in June 2022 under a suspended sentence that bars her from human rights work.

HuMENA

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Case reference HM-PS-2026-046

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Director of a Palestinian health organization, arrested at her home in Ramallah in July 2021 and held in Israeli prisons under charges linked to her work. A military court sentenced her in May 2022 to 16 months in prison; she was released early in June 2022 under a suspended sentence that bars her from human rights work.

STATUS	**At liberty**
ARRESTED	**7 Jul 2021**
COUNTRY	**Palestine**
CHARGES	**Holding a position in an unlawful association** **Receiving and bringing funds illegally into the area** **Receiving funds and support fraudulently** **Fraudulent use of documents** **Presence at a public event on 14 May 2019 (attendance at a memorial)**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Quash the conviction and drop any charges that remain on record against Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh in connection with peaceful human rights work.

02 Confirm publicly that Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case.

03 Guarantee that Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal.

04 Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/shatha-odeh-abu-fannouneh/

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
Denial of family visits	UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rule 58
Denial of medical care	UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rules 24 to 27
Inhumane detention conditions	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10 UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules)
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
Prolonged pretrial detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)
Trial before an exceptional court	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

03

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

14 May 2019

DEFENDER ACTIVITY

Attendance at memorial event

Shatha attended a public memorial event for Rabah Mhana, a former colleague at the Health Work Committees. This attendance later became one of the charges against her.

22 January 2020

CONTEXT

Her organisation declared unlawful

The Israeli military commander declared the Health Work Committees an unlawful organisation.

9 June 2021

OFFICE RAID

Health Work Committees office raided

Israeli forces raided the Health Work Committees' office in Ramallah and seized its computers, one month before Shatha's arrest.

7 July 2021

ARREST

Arrest at home in Ramallah

Fifteen Israeli soldiers raided Shatha's home near Ramallah and arrested her. They seized her mobile phone, the Health Work Committees' car keys, and the vehicle. She was taken to Ofer Military Camp, interrogated for nine hours, then transferred to Hasharon detention facility.

8 July 2021

HEARING

First hearing at Ofer Military Court

Shatha's first hearing took place at the Ofer Military Court. Her detention was extended until 14 July for further investigation.

14 July 2021

HEARING

Second hearing, detention extended

A second hearing took place and Shatha's detention was extended for five additional days.

15 July 2021

IMPROVEMENT IN TREATMENT

Access to medication partially granted

Prison authorities granted Shatha access to one of her prescribed medications after more than a week of denial. She has several chronic illnesses.

19 July 2021

HEARING

Third hearing, further extension

Shatha appeared before the Ofer Military Court. The prosecutor requested eight days to prepare the list of charges, and the judge extended her detention.

25 July 2021

IMPROVEMENT IN TREATMENT

Clean clothes finally permitted

After three court appearances in the same clothing, Israeli authorities allowed Shatha's family to bring her clean clothes for the first time since her arrest.

26 July 2021

HEARING

Fourth hearing, charges filed

Formal charges were filed at the fourth hearing: holding a position in an unlawful association, receiving and bringing funds illegally into the area, receiving funds and support fraudulently, fraudulent use of documents, and presence at a public event on 14 May 2019.

27 July 2021

TRANSFER BETWEEN PLACES OF DETENTION

Transfer to Damoun Female Prison

Shatha was transferred from Hasharon detention facility to Damoun Female Prison in Haifa.

17 August 2021

HEARING

Hearing with flawed translation

Shatha appeared before the Ofer Military Court. The list of charges was orally translated into Arabic by a translator who, according to Shatha's lawyer, made errors and added charges not formally pressed.

4 October 2021

HEARING

Hearing scheduled

A new hearing was scheduled before the Ofer Military Court.

12 May 2022

CONVICTION

Military court sentences her to 16 months and a fine

The Ofer military court sentenced her to 16 months in prison and a fine of 30,000 shekels, plus 12 months in prison suspended for five years on condition that she does not continue her human rights work.

3 June 2022

CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Released early under a suspended sentence

She was released early after serving two thirds of her prison term. A suspended 12-month prison term applies for five years if she continues her human rights work.

18 August 2022

CONTEXT

Her organisation raided and closed

Israeli forces raided and closed seven Palestinian organisations, including the Health Work Committees.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh served as Director of the Health Work Committees, a Palestinian organization providing health services to communities in remote areas of the West Bank where access to medical care was limited. The organization ran mobile clinics, trained local health workers, and coordinated emergency medical responses in areas underserved by permanent facilities. She managed the organization's day-to-day operations, including its staff, funding, and outreach programs.

The Arrest

On 7 July 2021, fifteen Israeli soldiers raided Shatha's home. They seized her mobile phone, the keys to the Health Work Committees' car, and the vehicle itself. She was taken to the Ofer Military Camp in Ramallah and interrogated for nine hours. She was then transferred to Hasharon detention facility, located outside the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Her family members could not travel to visit her; Israeli law required security permits that they did not hold.

Her arrest followed a raid on the Health Work Committees' Ramallah office on 9 June 2021, during which Israeli forces seized the organization's computers.

Detention Conditions and Health

Shatha was held in Hasharon and later transferred on 27 July 2021 to Damoun Female Prison in Haifa. During her detention in Hasharon, her cell lacked pillows and blankets and was under constant camera surveillance. Israeli authorities denied her family and lawyers' requests to bring her clean clothes until 25 July; she appeared at her first three court hearings in the same garments.

Shatha has several chronic illnesses. Prison authorities denied her access to one of her prescribed medications until 15 July, more than a week after her arrest. She lost a significant amount of weight during her detention, and her health condition deteriorated.

Legal Proceedings

Shatha's first hearing before the Ofer Military Court took place on 8 July 2021. Her detention was extended to 14 July for further investigation. On 14 July, a second hearing extended her detention for five more days. On 19 July, the prosecutor requested eight additional days to prepare charges, and the judge extended her detention again. On 26 July, formal charges were filed: holding a position in an unlawful association, receiving and bringing funds illegally into the area, receiving funds and support fraudulently, fraudulent use of documents, and presence at a public event on 14 May 2019. The last charge related to her attendance at a memorial event for Rabah Mhana, a former colleague at the Health Work Committees and a member of the political bureau of the Popular Front for the Liberation of

Palestine.

All hearings were conducted in Hebrew, a language Shatha does not speak and her family does not understand. On 17 August 2021, the list of charges was orally translated into Arabic by a translator who, according to Shatha's lawyer, made mistakes and added charges that had not been formally pressed. A further hearing was scheduled for 4 October 2021.

On 12 May 2022, the Ofer Military Court sentenced her to 16 months in prison and a fine of 30,000 shekels, plus 12 months suspended for five years on condition that she does not continue her human rights work. She was released early on 3 June 2022, after serving two thirds of her term.

Context

The charges against Shatha centered on her role as Director of the Health Work Committees and her participation in a 2019 public memorial. The organization has been targeted by Israeli authorities, including the June 2021 raid on its Ramallah office. Shatha's detention and trial before a military court are part of a broader pattern of prosecuting Palestinian civil-society leaders under association laws that criminalize affiliation with organizations designated by Israeli military orders.

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SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing about the case of Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh, former director of the Health Work Committees, an organization delivering health services to Palestinians in remote areas of the West Bank in Palestine, who has been released. I am writing to ask that the case be closed properly and that no further reprisal follows.

In brief: Director of a Palestinian health organization, arrested at her home in Ramallah in July 2021 and held in Israeli prisons under charges linked to her work. A military court sentenced her in May 2022 to 16 months in prison; she was released early in June 2022 under a suspended sentence that bars her from human rights work.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Quash the conviction and drop any charges that remain on record against Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh in connection with peaceful human rights work;
2. Confirm publicly that Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case;
3. Guarantee that Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal;
4. Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

I will continue to follow this case until the record against Shatha Odeh Abu Fannouneh is cleared and no reprisal remains.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026