

Advocacy dossier

Shawan Jabarin

شعوان جبارين

At liberty **Palestine**

Shawan Jabarin is the General Director of Al-Haq, a Palestinian human rights organisation that Israel designated a terrorist organisation in 2021 and the United States sanctioned in September 2025. He is at liberty in Ramallah, and in 2025 and 2026 France refused him visas for advocacy meetings in Europe.

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The case at a glance

Shawan Jabarin is the General Director of Al-Haq, a Palestinian human rights organisation that Israel designated a terrorist organisation in 2021 and the United States sanctioned in September 2025. He is at liberty in Ramallah, and in 2025 and 2026 France refused him visas for advocacy meetings in Europe.

Status	Arrested	Country
At liberty	**10 Mar 1994**	**Palestine**

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Immediately lift the travel ban imposed on Shawan Jabarin and on any family members affected by the same order.

02 Restore valid travel documents and remove any border-watch flags placed in connection with peaceful human rights work.

03 Comply with the ICCPR Article 12 guarantee of freedom of movement.

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How the case unfolded

1985

Conviction

Convicted by an Israeli court and sentenced to nine months

According to Human Rights Watch, Shawan Jabarin was convicted in 1985 and sentenced to nine months for helping two members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine travel abroad for training. He has denied any membership since his release.

August 1990

Administrative detention

Held in administrative detention and adopted as a prisoner of conscience

Israel held Shawan Jabarin repeatedly as an administrative detainee without charge or trial in the 1980s and 1990s. In August 1990, during one of these detentions, Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience.

10 March 1994

Administrative detention

Placed in administrative detention

He was placed in administrative detention on 10 March 1994.

May 1994

Release

Released from administrative detention

He was released in May 1994; the government told the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention that he had been released.

November 1994

Other act

UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention finds his detention arbitrary

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared his administrative detention arbitrary. Human Rights Watch reports that he was released in early 1998.

2006

Travel ban imposed

Israel imposes an indefinite travel ban after he becomes director of Al-Haq

Shortly after he became director of Al-Haq in March 2006, Israel imposed a travel ban on him by military order. Human Rights Watch notes that he had travelled abroad eight times in the seven years after his 1998 release.

10 March 2009

Appeal outcome

Israeli High Court refuses to lift the travel ban on secret evidence

The Israeli High Court refused to lift the ban, relying on secret evidence that neither he nor his lawyer could see. The ruling prevented him from travelling to the Netherlands to receive the 2009 Geuzen Medal awarded to Al-Haq jointly with B'Tselem.

22 February 2012

Other act

One-time exception to the travel ban for a trip to Geneva

After his lawyer petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court on 16 February 2012 to overturn the ban, the State Prosecutor agreed to a temporary exception allowing him to travel to Geneva at the invitation of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression. Israel had blocked his travel to receive awards in 2009 and 2011.

19 October 2021

Terrorist list designation

Israel designates Al-Haq and five other Palestinian groups as terrorist organisations

The Israeli Defence Ministry issued a military order under a 2016 statute designating Al-Haq, Addameer, Defense for Children International Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Bisan Center for Research and Development and the Union of Palestinian Women Committees as terrorist organisations. Human Rights Watch noted that the order allows the authorities to close their offices, seize assets and arrest staff.

18 August 2022

Office raid

Israeli forces raid and seal Al-Haq's Ramallah office

At about 3:00 am Israeli forces broke into Al-Haq's office in Ramallah, searched the rooms including the General Director's office, welded an iron door over the entrance and posted a military order to close the organisation. Several other designated organisations were raided the same night. Shawan Jabarin called the allegations baseless and said Al-Haq resumed work immediately.

4 September 2025

Other act

United States imposes sanctions on Al-Haq over its work with the ICC

The United States announced sanctions on Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, linking them to the organisations' requests that the International Criminal Court investigate Israel's conduct in Gaza.

October 2025

Other act

Schengen visa refused on public order grounds

His application for a Schengen visa was rejected on the ground that one or several EU member states considered him a threat to public policy or internal security. He had previously made numerous visits to France.

April 2026

Other act

France refuses him a visa before planned meetings in Europe

Shortly before a trip due to start on 10 April 2026, French authorities refused him a national visa. The refusal blocked briefings with the French Parliament, the French foreign ministry and the Council of Europe, and meetings at the European Parliament and the Belgian foreign ministry. Amnesty International, FIDH and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court condemned the decision.

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The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Shawan Jabarin continues to lead Al-Haq in Ramallah while the organisation remains under United States sanctions imposed in September 2025. In April 2026 France refused him a visa; Al-Haq reports that a French court suspended that refusal on 30 April 2026.

Background and Work

Shawan Jabarin is the General Director of Al-Haq, which Amnesty International describes as the oldest Palestinian human rights organisation. Born in 1960 in Sa'ir, in the Hebron district of the West Bank, he studied sociology at Birzeit University and later completed an LL.M. at the Irish Centre for Human Rights in Galway. He joined Al-Haq as a field researcher in 1987 and became its director in March 2006. He has held senior posts in FIDH, the International Federation for Human Rights, and in 2018 he received on Al-Haq's behalf the Human Rights Prize of the French Republic.

Under his direction Al-Haq has documented violations in the occupied Palestinian territory and engaged with the International Criminal Court. Amnesty International describes him as having dedicated his life to pursuing justice for international crimes.

Detention

Human Rights Watch reports that in 1985 he was convicted and sentenced to nine months for helping two members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine travel abroad for training; he has denied any membership since his release. In the 1980s and 1990s Israel held him repeatedly in administrative detention without charge or trial. Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience in August 1990, and in November 1994 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared his detention arbitrary. He was released in early 1998.

Travel Bans

Shortly after he became director of Al-Haq in 2006, Israel imposed a travel ban on him by military order. On 10 March 2009 the Israeli High Court refused to lift it, relying on secret evidence that neither he nor his lawyer could see, which prevented him from receiving the Geuzen Medal awarded to Al-Haq and B'Tselem in the Netherlands. Israel again blocked his travel to receive a prize in Denmark in 2011. After his lawyer petitioned the Supreme Court on 16 February 2012, the State Prosecutor agreed on 22 February 2012 to a one-time exception allowing him to travel to Geneva at the invitation of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression.

The Case Against Al-Haq

On 19 October 2021 the Israeli Defence Ministry designated Al-Haq and five other Palestinian groups, including Addameer, as terrorist organisations under a 2016 statute. Human Rights Watch noted that the order allows the authorities to close the groups' offices, seize their assets and arrest their staff. On 18 August 2022 Israeli forces raided Al-Haq's Ramallah office at about 3:00 am, searched its rooms including the General Director's office, welded an iron door over the entrance and posted an order closing the organisation. Jabarin called the allegations baseless and said Al-Haq

resumed work immediately.

On 4 September 2025 the United States announced sanctions on Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, linking them to the groups' requests that the International Criminal Court investigate Israel's conduct in Gaza.

Legal Proceedings

In October 2025 his application for a Schengen visa was refused on the ground that one or several EU member states considered him a threat to public policy or internal security. Al-Haq reports that the French interior ministry issued that refusal on 14 October 2025 and dismissed his administrative appeal on 17 December 2025. Shortly before a trip due to start on 10 April 2026, France also refused him a national visa, blocking briefings with the French Parliament, the foreign ministry and the Council of Europe, and meetings at the European Parliament and the Belgian foreign ministry. Al-Haq reports that on 30 April 2026 the administrative tribunal of Nantes granted interim relief, finding nothing to support the claim that he threatened public order and ordering the ministry to reconsider within 15 days.

International Response

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch repeatedly called on Israel to lift his travel ban. In April 2026 Amnesty International's Secretary General Agnès Callamard called the French decision shameful and deeply troubling, and FIDH and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court urged France to reverse it. Human Rights Watch said the refusal blocked his advocacy.

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