

*Attn: Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission and  
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*

*Brussels, April 26, 2021*

Dear VP/HR Mr. Borrell,

We are writing to express our deep concern about the situation of the Spanish citizen, Juana Ruiz Sánchez, a Palestinian resident for more than 35 years. Juana works as a Project Coordinator at the Palestinian health organization Health Work Committees (HWC) and was arbitrarily detained and imprisoned by Israel on April 13 when more than 20 Israeli soldiers stormed her home in the West Bank town of Beith Sahur, near the city of Bethlehem at 05:45 in the morning.

There is no specific charge involved in his arrest and imprisonment, and the only excuse given by the authorities is that she is being interrogated.

Along with Juana, two other people remain in administrative detention, Tayseer Abu Sharbak, current head of the HWC Accounting Department and Saeed Abbad, former head of this same Department until 2 years ago.

On 8 March, the Israeli army raided the central office of the Health Work Committees, and took computer material and documentation taken from the accounting department. This, together with these detentions, raise suspicions that those responsible are trying to prove some type of crime related to financing of the projects carried out by HWC and they seek to involve Juana Ruiz and her two colleagues in this accusation.

It is essential to note that Juana Ruiz, as well as Abu Sharbak and Abbad, are being detained without charge, a common practice of the Israeli authorities that violates international law. The UN Special Rapporteurs on torture and other cruel inhumane or degrading treatment, as well as the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, among other international human rights institution, have denounced this practice.

This arrest carried out by Israel is another attack on those who for years have developed prevention and health care activities in the West Bank due to the refusal of the Israeli authorities to assume their responsibility to guarantee access to health as the occupying power. It does not intend anything other than to continue the persecution against those who work in the humanitarian field and defend the rights of the Palestinian population.

For this reason, and given the urgency of the situation, we ask you as High Representative to do everything necessary to mediate in the situation of EU citizen Juana Ruiz Sánchez and her colleagues, demanding that they are immediately released. The European External Action Service must be present at all stages of the hearing and ensure the Israeli authorities do not threaten the integrity of Juana Ruiz Sánchez.

Sincerely,

**Manu Pineda.** The Left MEP and chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Palestine.

**Margrete Auken.** Greens/EFA MEP and vice-chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Palestine.

**Sira Rego.** The Left vice-president and MEP.

**Ernest Urtasun.** Greens/EFA vice-president and MEP.

**Nikolaj Villumsen.** The Left vice-president and MEP.

**Clare Daly.** The Left MEP.

**Idoia Villanueva.** The Left MEP.

**Kateřina Konečná.** The Left MEP.

**Marc Botenga.** The Left MEP.

**Mick Wallace.** The Left MEP.

**Miguel Urbán.** The Left MEP.

**Mounir Satouri.** Greens/EFA MEP.

**M<sup>a</sup> Eugenia Rodríguez Palop.** The Left MEP.

**Pernando Barrena.** The Left MEP.

**Rosa D'Amato.** Greens/EFA MEP.