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### **OPT: Proceedings against Mohannad Karajah paused pending Constitutional Appeal**

On 20 April 2026, the Ramallah Magistrate's Court held the second hearing in the case against human rights defender **Mohannad Karajah** and the group **Lawyers for Justice**, in connection with fabricated posts attributed to Mohannad Karajah and the group in October 2025. The Court found that the appeal submitted by the defence regarding the unconstitutionality of Article 150 of Penal Code No. 16 of 1960, related to "inciting sectarian strife", raises a significant constitutional issue about freedom of opinion and expression. Consequently, the trial has been temporarily adjourned until the Constitutional Court hears the appeal.

[Mohannad Karajah](#) is a Palestinian human rights defender and lawyer, and the director of [Lawyers for Justice](#), a Palestinian human rights initiative dedicated to defending fundamental rights and freedoms through legal aid, strategic litigation, and advocacy. With his leadership, the organisation provides legal representation to detainees, activists, and human rights defenders, monitors proceedings in Palestinian civil and military courts as well as Israeli military courts, and documents violations affecting a wide range of communities, including activists, women, minors, trade unions, and other vulnerable groups. His work has contributed to advancing fair trial guarantees and promoting the application of international human rights standards within domestic legal frameworks, while also strengthening public awareness of fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and protection from arbitrary detention.

During the hearing on 20 April 2026, the defence submitted an appeal challenging the constitutionality of Article 150 of Penal Code No. 16 of 1960, under which the charge of "inciting sectarian strife" was brought against the defender, arguing that it violates Article 19 of the Palestinian Basic Law and relevant international agreements protecting freedom of opinion and expression. In response, the Court found that the appeal raises a fundamental constitutional issue concerning the compatibility of Article 150 with constitutional guarantees of freedom of opinion and expression. The Court further considered the claim to be serious and convincing, and [granted the defence the respective legal period to formally submit the appeal before the Constitutional Court](#). Accordingly, the trial has been temporarily postponed until the constitutional appeal is submitted and adjudicated.

The case against Mohannad Karajah originates from a coordinated incitement and defamation campaign launched in May 2025, based on fabricated and manipulated content falsely attributed to him and Lawyers for Justice. This campaign was widely disseminated with the apparent aim of discrediting the work of Mohannad Karajah and inciting hostility against him. [Independent investigations confirmed that the circulated materials were falsified and formed part of a deliberate disinformation effort.](#)

The campaign was amplified by multiple individuals and platforms, including those reportedly linked to security services. The campaign not only defamed his professional reputation but also included explicit threats against his life. He faced intimidation at his home, with individuals arriving to threaten his family. Despite filing a formal complaint with the Public Prosecutor, no investigation

was carried out, nor was any protection provided. Instead, the harassment escalated, with attempts to obstruct his professional work by threatening detainees not to appoint him as their lawyer.

On 26 October 2025 Mohannad Karajah was detained for several hours upon returning to Palestine due to the ongoing campaign against him. He was later released due to the absence of any legal grounds for his detention. The following day, the human rights defender was summoned by the Public Prosecution regarding a related complaint. Mohannad Karajah presented evidence proving the allegations were false, but the Chief Prosecutor requested his Facebook password, which he refused, citing privacy rights. After this refusal, a formal investigation was opened, and a [48-hour detention order](#) was issued. Mohannad Karajah was released after 24 hours in detention.

These developments occurred within the broader context of shrinking civic space in Palestine, where human rights defenders are increasingly subjected to harassment, arbitrary detention, and smear campaigns.

Front Line Defenders welcomes the decision of the Ramallah Magistrate's Court, viewing it as a significant and constructive step towards re-evaluating the application of Article 150 of Penal Code No. 16 of 1960 in prosecuting human rights defenders and activists in Palestine. The organisation anticipates that the forthcoming appeal will be given thorough consideration by the Constitutional Court, resulting in an impartial resolution that adheres to the legal and constitutional rights enshrined in the Palestinian Basic Law. Front Line Defenders remains concerned that the prosecution against Mohannad Karajah is directly linked to his peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

#### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Palestine to:**

1. Ensure that the constitutional appeal concerning Article 150 of Penal Code No. 16 of 1960 is examined independently, impartially, and within a reasonable time frame, in full compliance with the Palestinian Basic Law and relevant international human rights obligations;
2. Carry out a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation into the incitement, threats, and defamation campaign against Mohannad Karajah and Lawyers for Justice, and hold those responsible accountable;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mohannad Karajah;
4. Refrain from applying Article 150 or other broadly worded penal provisions in a manner that restricts freedom of opinion and expression or is used to target human rights defenders;
5. Guarantee that all human rights defenders in Palestine are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals.

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