



Press release, 01.02.12

## **MEPs appeal for the release of all detained members of the Palestinian Legislative Council**

**Prominent members of the European Parliament , among them Vice-Presidents of the Parliament, Presidents of Political Groups and chairs of Delegations, today launched an appeal for the release of the twenty-six democratically elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council who are detained in Israeli jails contrary to international law. Here is the full Press statement by Proinsias de Rossa, outgoing chair of the Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council.**

Recalling the European Parliament resolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2008 calling for "the immediate release of the imprisoned members of the Palestinian Legislative Council including **Marwan Barghouti**", we, urge the EU and its Member States to take immediate action in order to ensure the release of all detained Members of the PLC, who are currently 26.

The values of democracy and human rights and the need to uphold them in all contexts, was highlighted by the Arab Spring.

We therefore express our condemnation of the latest escalation against Palestinian legislators. The arrest of the President of the PLC, and of several other members of Parliament, including in the premises of the International Committee of the Red Cross, is unacceptable and provocative. The overwhelming majority of the parliamentarians are held under administrative detention, based solely on their political affiliation. We call for an immediate and definitive halt of all measures targeting our Palestinian Parliamentary colleagues, including arrests and expulsions from Jerusalem.

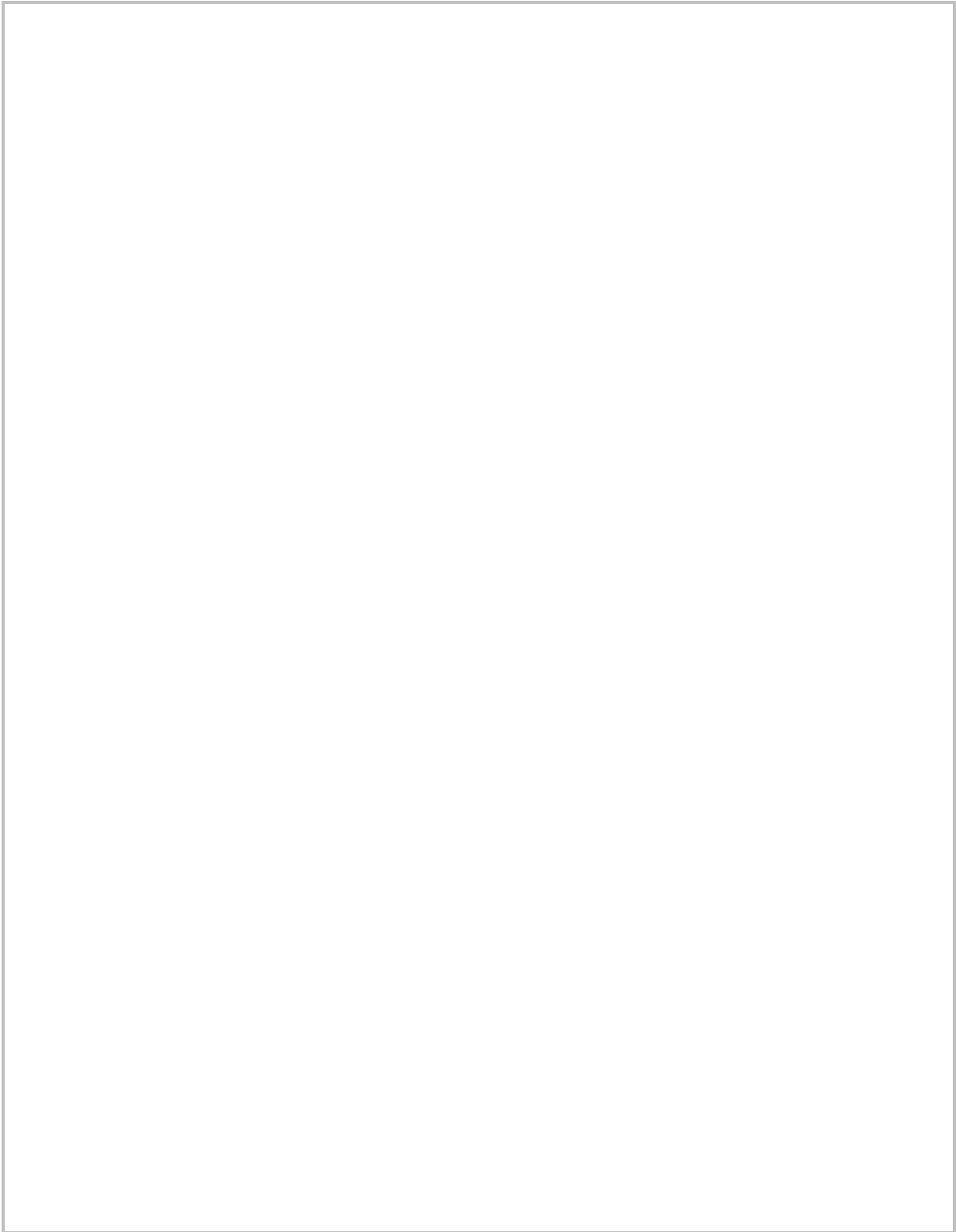
This policy is far from new. **Marwan Barghouti**, a key political figure who continues enjoying an unequalled popularity among Palestinians, was the first MP to be detained and will soon conclude his 10<sup>th</sup> year in Israeli jails. In 2007, one-third of the democratically elected PLC members were held in Israeli jails. Over 20 of them still remain detained today. Among them, **Ahmad Saadate**, whose health remains worrying.

The most recent arrests aim clearly at undermining the prospect of Palestinian reconciliation and preventing the resumption of parliamentary life. They also jeopardize peace efforts. A strong and determined demand by the international community to free all Palestinian parliamentarians is long overdue and must become a priority and an immediate appeal for the EU Council of Foreign Ministers, the High Representative and the European External Action Service, as well as the European Parliament.

Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council.  
*In the Chair: Proinsias de Rossa*

Signatories :

*Sir Robert Atkins, Margrete Auken, Malika Benarab-Attou, Frida Brepoels, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Rosario Crocetta, Chris Davies, Veronique de Keyser, Proinsias de Rossa, Jill Evans, Helene Flautre, Anna Hedh, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Patrick Le Hyaric, Barbara Lochbihler, Liz Lynne, Edward McMillan-Scott, Marisa Mattias, Willy Meyer, Erminia Mazzoni, Norbert Neuser, Gianni Pittella, Niccolò Rinaldi, Alexandra Thein, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Hannes Swoboda, Ivo Vajgl.*



*This is an informal message intended to help journalists covering the work of the European Parliament. It is neither an official press release nor a comprehensive record of proceedings.*