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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**EIBF condemns raids on Palestinian bookshops**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, Israeli police raided the Palestinian-owned bookshop *Educational Bookshop* in East Jerusalem, arresting and detaining two of its owners overnight, booksellers Mahmoud Muna and his nephew Ahmed Muna, according to [media reports](#).

The *Educational Bookshop* has been an iconic venue and cultural hub for decades, providing access to a wide range of books both in English and Arabic, promoting diversity, the circulation of knowledge, and freedom of speech. The bookshop is also considered to be key in maintaining the vibrancy of Palestinian intellectual and cultural life amidst tense political circumstances. With its three store locations, it stands as an established value in the local Jerusalem community, with a customer base including readers of diverse religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.

EIBF and our community of booksellers firmly believe in Freedom of Expression as a fundamental human right and the cornerstone of a healthy democracy. Reading books is not only enjoyable – it also promotes the exchange of knowledge, it leads to new ideas, and it encourages critical thinking. Bookshops are open, inclusive, welcoming spaces for everyone and they shouldn't be targeted for doing what they do best: providing a space where literacy is promoted, and a diverse range of books and ideas can coexist and thrive. It is fundamental that booksellers who operate them shouldn't be silenced, censored, or threatened solely for providing this invaluable service to their community.

EIBF's [Freedom of Expression Charter](#) stands as a declaration of our unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights of booksellers and the vital role they play in ensuring that knowledge remains free and accessible to all. Furthermore, our recent [Industry Insights](#) research paper highlights the critical role bookshops play in fostering an environment where diverse ideas can thrive, contributing to cultural and intellectual exchange across borders.

About EIBF: EIBF is a non-commercial European and international umbrella organisation representing national booksellers associations and booksellers around the world. Through its member associations, EIBF speaks on behalf of more than 25,000 individual booksellers.

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For these reasons, we condemn any acts of violence and oppression against booksellers and bookshops who are simply fulfilling their core mission of fostering Freedom of Expression, tolerance, and peaceful exchange of ideas.

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