Journalist who claimed Palestinian Authority arrests dissidents arrested by PA

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Palestinian security forces have detained a Palestinian journalist after he wrote critical posts on social media, an activist group said Thursday.

The committee of families of political detainees said that Akil Awawdeh was arrested earlier Thursday after he disparaged claims by a spokesman for the security services that there are no political arrests in the West Bank.

“For God’s sake,” he wrote on Facebook. “You should respect our minds more than that.”

Awawdeh, a reporter for a local radio station, is an outspoken critic of the Palestinian Authority and has had problems with security forces before. Two years ago, he was severely beaten inside a police station after covering a protest against the Palestinian Authority.

Human rights groups have repeatedly accused Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas of stifling dissent by arresting people who write critical posts on social media and employing harsh tactics to disperse protests.

Palestinian officials had no immediate comment on Awadeh’s arrest.

The committee of families of political detainees is affiliated with the rival Hamas terror group. It says it aims to raise awareness about politically motivated arrests in the West Bank.

The Palestinian Authority governs semi-autonomous zones in the West Bank.