

PUBLIC

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To: Health professionals
From: Medical office / East Asia subregional team
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FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

(See MDE 15/06/98 - 23 January 1998)

**Mordechai VANUNU
ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

On 12 March 1998, Mordechai Vanunu was let out of solitary confinement for the first time in over 11 years and allowed to mingle with other prisoners. A statement from the Justice Ministry said his isolation was to end after consultations with psychiatrists who said that "extended isolation would damage his mental state". A petition had been due to go to the Supreme Court calling for an end to his isolation on the grounds that it constituted a cruel and unusual punishment.

Mordechai Vanunu's fundamental rights have been consistently violated ever since he disclosed classified information to the *Sunday Times* newspaper in London, saying that, despite denials, Israel was running a major secret nuclear weapons program. He was abducted in Rome in September 1986 by agents of the Israeli Government and flown to Israel under sedation. He was then held in secret unacknowledged detention until November of that year. His trial was also secret and he has been prevented from speaking at every court appearance since then - sometimes by being physically gagged. Until this decision to end his isolation was taken, Israeli officials had consistently argued that he could not be released or allowed to mix with others because he risked passing on more information.

The Justice Ministry is quoted in the press as saying "he will continue to sleep in his own cell, but would be allowed to meet other prisoners outside his block during the day and, if he so wishes, to invite inmates into his cell".

No further action is requested at present. Thank you for having appealed on his behalf.