

URGENT ACTION

HUNGER STRIKER GRAVELY ILL, LIFE AT RISK

Samer Issawi, 34, has been on hunger strike in Israeli detention since August 2012. His life is in grave danger.

Samer Issawi has been held by the Israeli authorities since 7 July 2012 who allege – without specifying how – that he broke the conditions on which he was released, as part of a prisoner exchange, in October 2011. He has been on hunger strike since 1 August 2012 in protest at an Israeli military committee's refusal to explain to him or his lawyer the reasons for being detained.

Samer Issawi has spent most of his time while on hunger strike at the Ramleh prison clinic. Although he has been taken to a civilian hospital in Israel numerous times for emergency tests, most recently on 22 and 27 January, he was brought back within hours to the Ramleh prison clinic.

On 31 January 2013, Samer Issawi reportedly stopped taking vitamins and threatened to stop drinking water. He also threatened to reject any further medical examinations provided by the Israeli Prison Service if he was not released.

His lawyer told Amnesty International that Samer Issawi's health has deteriorated rapidly in recent weeks due to his six-month hunger strike. When his lawyer visited him on 31 January, Samer Issawi weighed only 47 kilograms (almost half his original body weight) and medical staff at Ramleh prison clinic warned that he may soon die.

Amnesty International is concerned that, having been in hunger strike for over six months, Samer Issawi will not receive the required urgent and specialized medical care he needs at Ramleh prison clinic, which lacks the facilities or specialist staff that are required to provide appropriate care for hunger strikers at an advanced stage.

Please write immediately in Hebrew, English or your own language:

- Urging the Israeli authorities to ensure that Samer Issawi receives appropriate medical care, or is immediately released to enable him to receive the urgent and specialized care and treatment he needs;
- Urging them to ensure that he is treated humanely at all times and not punished in any way for his hunger strike.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 MARCH 2013 TO:

Israel Prison Service Commissioner

Lieutenant-General Aharon Franco
Israel Prison Service, PO Box 81
Ramleh 72100, Israel
Fax: +972 8 919 3800

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General

Director General, Ministry of Health

Dr. Roni Gamzo
Ministry of Health
2 Ben Tabai Street
Jerusalem 93591, Israel
Fax: +972 2 565 5966

Salutation: Dear Director General

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security
Yitzhak Aharonovitch
Ministry of Public Security
Kiryat Hamemshala
Jerusalem 91181, Israel
Fax: +972 2 584 7872
Email: sar@mops.gov.il

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Samer Issawi was arrested on 7 July 2012 when he was crossing an Israeli military checkpoint leading to his home in Jerusalem. He was initially held at the Moscobiyya Detention Centre where he was interrogated for 28 days. He was denied access to his lawyer for the first 23 days of his detention. He was then moved to Nafha prison in the Negev desert, southern Israel.

He began his hunger strike on 1 August 2012, in protest at the refusal of an Israeli military committee to explain to him or his lawyer the detailed allegations that form the basis for his current detention. The committee – composed of three military judges – is apparently seeking to reinvoke the 30-year sentence Samer Issawi was serving before being released in the prisoner-exchange deal. The case brought forward by the military committee is based on secret information related to how he “breached” the conditions of his release. This information is not available to Samer Issawi or his lawyer, ensuring they are unable to mount a defence.

In parallel proceedings, Samer Issawi has also been charged by a civilian court with breaking the conditions of his release by entering the occupied West Bank. The Jerusalem Magistrate’s Court held a session on 18 December 2012 to consider the charges brought against Samer Issawi by the civilian General Prosecutor. Samer Issawi entered the courtroom bound to a wheelchair and escorted by special police forces. When he tried to greet his mother and sister in the courtroom he was attacked by the police officers who hit him on his neck, chest and stomach. While he was being removed from the court, he fell out of his wheelchair. At noon that same day the Israeli army raided the Issawi family home and arrested Samer Issawi’s sister. She was released 24 hours later on a 3,000 shekel bails (US\$800) and placed under house arrest for ten days. She was banned from visiting her brother for six months.

Samer Issawi had previously spent approximately 12 years in prison after conviction of possession of weapons and forming military groups in Jerusalem. He was released on 18 October 2011 in the prisoner-exchange deal between Hamas and Israel, which saw the phased release of 1,027 Palestinians in return for the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Name: Samer Issawi
Gender m/f: m

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