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Legal Concern

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ISRAEL AND THE

OCCUPIED TERRITORIES:

Abie Nathan

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Amnesty International is calling on the Israeli authorities to halt the current trial proceedings against Abie Nathan, a well-known Israeli peace campaigner, and to drop the charges brought against him. Abie Nathan is being tried under a law forbidding contacts between Israeli citizens and groups designated as "terrorist" by the Israeli authorities. If convicted under this law, Abie Nathan may be imprisoned as a prisoner of conscience. He is not currently detained.

Abie Nathan, aged 64, was brought to trial on 15 May 1991 on the charge that he had met Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser 'Arafat in Tunis on 10 and 16 March 1990. During these meetings he reportedly discussed the development of the Middle East peace process, direct talks between the PLO and Israel, the intifada (uprising) and the fate of Israeli soldiers missing in Lebanon. The law under which he has been charged is a 1986 amendment to Section 4 of the 1948 Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance.

Abie Nathan was previously sentenced under the same law on 3 October 1989 to 18 months' imprisonment, 12 months of which were suspended, for having met Chairman 'Arafat and other senior PLO leaders in Tunis and Strasbourg in September 1988. He was released on 10 February 1990 after his sentence was reduced by one third for good behaviour. Amnesty International called at that time for his release as a prisoner of conscience.

Abie Nathan is currently on the 20th day of a hunger-strike to protest against the law. He is quoted as saying, "*I am not fasting to die, but to raise the consciousness of ... people ... I don't intend to continue living in a country where there are laws that prevent people from talking peace to the enemy.*" If convicted again he faces a maximum sentence of three years, or a fine, or both, with the possibility of his one-year suspended sentence also being activated.

Amnesty International believes that if convicted and imprisoned, Abie Nathan would be a prisoner of conscience, held solely on account of his non-violent political beliefs and peace activities. It is therefore calling for all charges against him to be dropped.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the law under which Abie Nathan has been charged may lead to further people being sentenced to imprisonment solely for having exercised their right to peaceful political activity. Trial proceedings have been initiated against 12 other Israelis who have met PLO officials in recent years. Amnesty International urges the Israeli authorities to review the law to ensure that it does not result in the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern that Abie Nathan who is currently on trial, would be a prisoner of conscience if convicted and imprisoned;
- asking the Israeli authorities to drop all charges against him;
- urging the authorities to review this law to ensure that it does not result in the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience.

**PLEASE ORGANIZE 10 APPEALS PER SECTION**

**APPEALS TO**

Mr Dan Meridor  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
29 Salah A-Din Street  
Jerusalem 91010, Israel

**Telegrams: Justice Minister Meridor, Jerusalem, Israel**  
**Faxes: +972 2 869473**

Mr Yitzak Shamir  
Prime Minister  
Officer of the Prime Minister  
3 Kaplan Street  
Hakirya  
Jerusalem 91919, Israel

**Telegrams: Prime Minister Shamir, Jerusalem, Israel**  
**Telexes: 25279 MPRES IL**  
**Faxes: + 972 2 303367**

Mr Chaim Herzog  
President of the State of Israel  
Office of the President  
Beit Hanasi  
3 Hakeset Street  
Jerusalem 92188, Israel

**Telegrams: President Herzog, Jerusalem, Israel**

**COPIES TO:**

Judge Yosef Harish  
Attorney General  
c/o Ministry of Justice  
29 Salah al-Din Street  
PO Box 1087  
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**Faxes: + 972 2 708511**

and to diplomatic representatives of Israel in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 June 1991.