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ISRAEL: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S STATEMENT ON RON ARAD

According to media reports today, *The Organization of the Oppressed* claimed that they would execute Israeli airman Ron Arad within 48 hours, film his execution and distribute a video cassette to the international media. Amnesty International can not verify that *The Organization of the Oppressed* is holding Ron Arad or the likelihood that they would execute him if they are.

Since 1986, when Ron Arad "disappeared" after being taken prisoner, Amnesty International has sought clarification about his fate. Amnesty International fears that he may be held as a hostage in the aim of compelling others to release detainees or to provide information about missing persons.

Whilst taking no position on the legitimacy of resorting to arms in pursuit of political aims, Amnesty International opposes human rights abuses such as the taking of hostages and torture or killing of prisoners by either governments or armed opposition groups.

Amnesty International is therefore urging *The Organization of the Oppressed* that if they are holding Ron Arad hostage, not to carry out its threat to execute him and to release him immediately and unconditionally. The organization is also urging that Ron Arad be treated humanely and not be subjected to any form of torture or ill-treatment.

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