

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 15/35/96

24 May 1996

Further information on EXTRA 70/96 (MDE 15/34/96, 20 May 1996) - Prisoner of conscience

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Dr Iyad al-Sarraj, human rights defender

Dr Iyad al-Sarraj, a prominent human rights defender, who was arrested on 18 May, remains in custody in Gaza. He was questioned about a recent interview he gave to the *New York Times* on 6 May 1996 in which he was critical of human rights abuses in the Palestinian Authority.

On 21 May his detention was extended "for questioning" by the State Security Court for a further 15 days. No lawyer was present during the hearing which was before a military judge. On 22 May Amnesty International was able to telephone Dr Iyad al-Sarraj where he is imprisoned in the Police Headquarters in Gaza. No charge has yet been filed against him, and part from his brief appearance before a military judge on 21 May, he does not appear to have been questioned since his initial interrogation on 18 May.

On 23 May, in a meeting with the legislative council, President Yasser Arafat's spokesman said that he would instruct judicial authorities to "free all prisoners being held without charge", when asked to release Dr Iyad al-Sarraj.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Arabic or English or in your own language:

- expressing concern that Dr Iyad al-Sarraj remains held in detention without charge;
- demanding his immediate and unconditional release, as a prisoner of conscience;
- calling on the Palestinian Authority to ensure that organizations and employees engaged in protecting human rights and in monitoring human rights violations are supported and protected.

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
Head of the Palestinian Authority
Palestinian Authority
Al-Muntada,
Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Telegrams: Chairman Arafat, Gaza, via Israel
Faxes: +972 7 823 744
Salutation: Dear Mr. Arafat

President Arafat is currently on a visit to Oman. If possible, please organize some appeals, before the end of 28 May 1996, marked "for the attention of President Arafat", to:

Telegrams: Sultan Qaboos, Muscat, Oman
Telexes: 5016

Minister of Justice Mr Freih Abu Meddein
Ministry of Justice
Abu Khadra Building
Omar al-Mukhtar Street
Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Faxes: +972 7 822 236

Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Palestinian Authority, Gaza, via Israel

Salutation: Dear Minister

Khaled al-Qidreh
Attorney General
Palestinian Authority
Attorney General Building
Yarmouk, Gaza,
Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Attorney General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza via Israel

Faxes: +972 7 824 503

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Please also telephone or fax **messages of support** to Dr Iyad al-Sarraj to the following number (shared telephone/fax line at the Police Headquarters in Gaza) where he is being held: **+972 7822 335**

COPIES TO:

The Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights
Ritz Hotel
Jerusalem
via Israel

Faxes: +972 2 282 869

and to diplomatic representatives of the Palestinian Authority accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 June 1996.