

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 15/39/96

10 June 1996

Further information on EXTRA 70/96 (MDE 15/34/96, 20 May 1996) and follow-ups (MDE 15/35/96, 24 May and MDE 15/36/96, 28 May) - Prisoner of Conscience

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Dr Iyad al-Sarraj, human rights defender

Dr Iyad al-Sarraj, a prominent human rights defender, is again in detention in Gaza. He was arrested at midnight on 9/10 June. As of the time of writing, no charges have been brought against him. Amnesty International believes that he is a prisoner of conscience.

Attorney General of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Khaled al-Qidreh, said that Dr Iyad al-Sarraj has been remanded in custody for an initial 48-hour period pending investigations. Although no reason for his detention has been given, Khaled al-Qidreh has reportedly insisted that the arrest is not related to Dr Iyad al-Sarraj's human rights activities, nor to the work of his association (the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights (PICCR) of which he is the Commissioner General) nor to his freedom of expression. The Attorney General's office has searched the office of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program, of which Dr Iyad al-Sarraj is the director, and has confiscated material.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dr Iyad al-Sarraj was previously detained for nine hours on 7 December 1995 and questioned about criticisms he had made about the PA's human rights record. He was questioned by the police in the presence of the Attorney General.

Dr Iyad al-Sarraj was again arrested on 18 May 1996 and held for eight days. He was questioned about an interview he gave to the *New York Times* on 6 May 1996 in which he described human rights violations under the Palestinian Authority, including arbitrary arrests and torture. He was not formally charged with any offence and yet was released only on bail on 26 May.

Dr Iyad al-Sarraj is Director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program and Human Rights Commissioner General of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights (PICCR).

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 has again been arrested and 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:

Chairman 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

Minister of Justice Mr Freih Abu Meddein
Ministry of Justice
Abu Khadra Building
Omar al-Mukhtar Street
Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Faxes: +972 7 867 109
Telegrams: Justice Minister, 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

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 10 July 1996.