

23 September 1997

Further information on UA 262/97 (MDE 15/46/97, 7 August 1997) - Fear of Torture / Legal Concern

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES Further mass arrests of people in the northern West Bank

Amnesty International is concerned by the continuing mass arrests and detention of suspected supporters of *Hamas* and other Islamist groups by the Israeli authorities in response to the latest suicide bombings in Jerusalem on 30 July and 4 September 1997.

According to a report in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'Aretz*, on 23 September, around 500 persons have been arrested since 30 July. About 300 of these have subsequently been placed under administrative detention.

The latest arrests occurred on 21 and 22 September with around 100 residents from Asirah al-Shamaliyya and other villages in the northern West Bank being detained. There are fears that many of these may be subjected to torture or ill-treatment or placed under administrative detention. The lawyer of one detainee, arrested on 1 August, reported that his client was subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including violent shaking (*tiltul*) and prolonged sleep deprivation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The General Security Service (GSS) is known to systematically use forms of ill-treatment, including torture, of political detainees. The GSS justifies the use of physical and psychological pressure on detainees by saying that it may lead to them gaining knowledge of the whereabouts of bombs aimed at killing civilians. Since October 1994 a special ministerial committee has permitted the use of "increased physical pressure" by the GSS on top of the "moderate physical pressure" permitted them in guidelines contained in the 1987 Landau report.

In recent years, a number of persons detained following suicide bombings have been placed under administrative detention. This is a procedure under which detainees are held without charge or trial in violation of fundamental human rights. Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that no-one should be subjected to arbitrary detention. The organization considers that all political prisoners, including those held in administrative detention, must be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a fair trial within a reasonable time, or be released.

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

- recognizing the revulsion caused by the deliberate and arbitrary killing of civilians but stressing that there is no excuse to justify the use of further human rights violations, including ill-treatment and torture;
- demanding that those detained be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a fair trial within a reasonable time or be released;
- calling on the Israeli authorities to ensure that, in accordance with the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Israel in 1991, no one is subjected to physical or psychological torture or ill-treatment while in detention.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Binyamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Jerusalem 91919
State of Israel

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Telexes: 25279 mpres il
Faxes: +972-2-566-4838
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

General Yitzhak Mordechai
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
7 'A' Street
Hakirya, Tel Aviv
Israel

Telegrams: Defence Minister, Tel Aviv Israel
Faxes: +972 3 697 6218
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Tzahi Hanegbi
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
29 Salah al-Din Street
Jerusalem 91029
State of Israel

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Faxes: +972-2-6285-438
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 November 1997.