

PUBLIC AI Index: MDE 21/04/00

EXTRA 12/00 Fear of torture and ill-treatment / Incommunicado  
detention / Legal concern 29 February 2000

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY About 30 students and one employee of Birzeit University

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of about 30 students and one staff member from Birzeit University in the West Bank who are being held incommunicado in Palestinian General Intelligence and Preventive Security Service (PSS) detention centres in Jericho and Ramallah. This follows mass arrests which took place after violent demonstrations broke out at the university on 26 February 2000.

The organization is particularly concerned by reports from students since released that they and others were repeatedly kicked and beaten in PSS detention.

The mass arrests reportedly took place on the university campus and in nearby towns and villages and included students who did not take part in the demonstration and were not involved in any violence.

At a demonstration on the 27 February in protest at the arrests, student Muhannad Abu Ghosh was reportedly beaten during his arrest by General Intelligence officers. He is now believed to be detained in Jericho.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The demonstration coincided with a visit by French Prime Minister Jospin and other French and Palestinian officials to the University, which is north of Ramallah in the West Bank. The demonstrators had been angered by remarks made by Jospin on 24 February when he described attacks by the Lebanese armed group *Hizbullah* as "terrorist". A large number of demonstrators threw stones and lumps of earth at the Prime Minister's entourage, reportedly hitting him and causing damage to his car. An Agence French Press (AFP), French Press Agency photographer present was wounded by stones thrown by demonstrators and had his ankle broken when he was then run over by a car in the entourage.

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

- seeking assurances that students and employees of Birzeit University arrested since 26 February 2000 will not be tortured or ill-treated in detention;
- calling for their immediate release if they are not to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences and tried according to international standards for fair trial;
- asking that all those in detention be given immediate access to their families and to their lawyers;
- calling on the Palestinian Authority to order an independent and impartial inquiry into allegations that detainees were tortured or ill-treated during their arrest and detention and asking that the results be made public.

#### APPEALS TO (please note that two of the fax numbers provided are telephone lines and may be difficult to get through to):

President Yasser Arafat  
Palestinian Authority  
Office of the President

The Beach Forum

Gaza City

Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: President Arafat, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**

**Faxes: + 972 7 282 2365 (when voice answers, please request fax tone)**

**Salutation: Dear President Arafat**

Brigadier General Tawfik al-Tirawi

Head of the General Intelligence (West Bank)

Ramallah

Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: Brigadier General al-Tirawi, Palestinian Authority, Jericho**

**Faxes: + 972 2 232 1283**

**Salutation: Dear Brigadier General al-Tirawi**

Colonel Jibril al-Rajub

Head of the Preventive Security Service (West Bank)

Jericho

Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: Colonel al-Rajub, Palestinian Authority, Jericho**

**Faxes: + 972 2 232 1273 (when voice answers, please request fax tone)**

**Salutation: Dear Brigadier General al-Tirawi**

**COPIES TO:**

Hasan Khreisheh

Chairman of the Human Rights Committee

Palestinian Legislative Council

P O Box 1930 Ramallah

Palestinian Authority

and to representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)  
accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 March 2000.