

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/15/00

UA 202/00

7 July 2000

Pri.

**PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY 'Abd al-Fattah Ghanem, aged 60, Presidential Adviser
on Refugees**

The Presidential Adviser on Refugees has been arrested by Palestinian police. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience.

'Abd al-Fattah Ghanem was summoned to a police station and arrested on 21 June. No warrant was shown and he has been held incommunicado ever since, without access to a lawyer or his family, in Ramallah Central Prison. The authorities have given no reason for his arrest. He was reportedly told that President Arafat had ordered his arrest.

The day before he was arrested, members of Force 17, one of the Palestinian special forces, searched his office in Gaza city, examining documents and computer files. His daughter believes that his arrest is connected with statements he made to newspapers regarding the failure to find a just settlement to the Palestinian refugee question, and complaining of administrative corruption in connection with the issue. More than three million Palestinians are living as refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. The fate of these refugees is one of the main issues in the final status peace talks between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority.

Amnesty International considers 'Abd al-Fattah Ghanem a prisoner of conscience detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression. Prolonged incommunicado detention without access to the outside world is prohibited by international human rights standards and may constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

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

- stating that Amnesty International considers 'Abd al-Fattah Ghanem to be a prisoner of conscience detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- seeking assurances that he is being well treated;
- asking that he be granted immediate access to his family and lawyer;
- requesting details of the reason for his arrest and whether he has been charged or brought before a court in connection with a particular offence;
- asking the Palestinian Authority not to detain anyone for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
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 ask for fax tone)

Salutation: Dear President Arafat

Brigadier General Ghazi Jabali

Head of the Palestinian Police
Police Headquarters
Gaza City
Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Brigadier General Jabali, Palestinian Authority, Gaza
Faxes: + 972 282 2335 (when voice answers, please ask for fax tone)
Salutation: Dear Brigadier General Jabali

Advocate Zuheir Sourani
Attorney General
Attorney General Building
Yarmouk, Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Telegrams: Attorney General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza
Faxes: + 972 7 282 4502
Salutation: Dear Advocate Sourani

COPIES TO:

Mr Qadura Fares
Chairman of the Human Rights and Monitoring Committee
Palestinian Legislative Council
P O Box 1930 Ramallah
Palestinian Authority

Salutation: Dear Mr Fares

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 18 August 2000.