

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 80/02

Fea.

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Akram al Zatma (m), aged 22

Akram al-Zatma, from Rafah in Gaza, was sentenced to death by the State Security Court in Gaza on 24 October, on charges of "collaborating" with the Israeli authorities. He has apparently denied the charge. Amnesty International fears his execution may be imminent.

The death sentence imposed on Akram al-Zatma must be ratified by President Yasser Arafat, after which he could be executed at any time. Attitudes towards suspected collaborators within Palestinian society is extremely hostile, and even if President Arafat does not ratify the sentence, Akram al-Zatma is still in real danger of being killed, either inside prison or if released.

He was arrested on 8 August 2002 and was reportedly held by the Palestinian Authority Preventive Security in Tal al-Hawa, Gaza City. According to reports, he has alleged that he was tortured by his interrogators. Akram al-Zatma's trial began three weeks after his arrest. He was convicted of "collaboration" in connection with the Israeli Defence Force attack on Gaza on 22 July which killed 17 people including nine children. The attack killed leading *Hamas* activist, Salah Shehada, who had been accused by the Israeli authorities for organizing a number of suicide attacks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has previously condemned trials by the State Security Court as being grossly unfair. Trials are often summary, take place before military judges, and have no right of appeal.

People convicted of "collaboration" with Israel face extremely harsh treatment. Since the beginning of the current *intifada* in September 2000, three alleged "collaborators" have been executed after summary unfair trials. Scores of other "collaborators" have been killed by armed Palestinians.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic or your own language:

- calling on President Arafat not to ratify the death sentences passed on Akram al-Zatma and expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty;
- calling for an independent investigation into the torture allegations, with the result made public and the perpetrators brought to justice;
- expressing concern that these and other trials before the State Security Court are grossly unfair, failing to meet even minimum international standards for fair trial;
- calling for a retrial to take place before an ordinary criminal court in accordance with international standards for fair trial and without recourse to the death penalty;
- urging that no more executions be carried out and that the death penalty be abolished.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic or English or your own language:

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
The President's Office, Ramallah
Palestinian Authority
Fax: + 972 2 296 3176 (it may be difficult to get through; please keep trying)
Salutation: Dear President Arafat

Ibrahim Dughmeh
Minister of Justice
P O Box 1021
Gaza
Palestinian Authority
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Fax: + 972 8 286 7109
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: and to diplomatic representatives of Palestinian Authority
accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 December 2002.