

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Jenin: Access denied to Amnesty International Forensic Expert - legal action considered**

*Derrick Pounder, Professor of Forensic Medicine at Dundee University, currently on mission with Amnesty International, has been denied access to Jenin refugee camp and Jenin Government Hospital.*

*The only forensic pathologist in the vicinity, Professor Pounder had sought access to the camp in order to begin gathering vital evidence about the fate of those who died in Jenin.*

*The Amnesty International delegation had gone to Jenin because of reports that a major humanitarian and human rights disaster was occurring in the camp with thousands of people still trapped without food or water in an area flattened and littered with debris and decomposing bodies.*

*"There are two urgent tasks. The first is the humanitarian task of gathering evidence to identify the dead so that the bodies can be given to the families. The second is to obtain forensic evidence about the causes and circumstances of death which will clarify what has been happening in Jenin camp" said Professor Pounder. "International human rights and humanitarian law require that forensic investigations are conducted in this respect. The refusal to allow us to conduct or even to assist in enabling others to conduct such investigations is very serious and gives rise to questions about the authorities' motives."*

*There are only a small number of forensic experts in Israel and among Palestinians, none of whom are in Jenin or the camp and Amnesty*

*International is concerned that the longer the bodies deteriorate the less hard facts and objective evidence will be available about how these people came to their deaths.*

*Amnesty International, together with other organisations including Adalah, the Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, is considering legal action in Israel to ensure that access to Jenin refugee camp and hospital is granted. The organisation also condemned the authorities' refusal to allow adequate help into the camp to deal with the survivors, including many still trapped inside collapsed houses.*

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