

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Israel/Occupied Territories: Torture and ill-treatment under scrutiny at UN in Geneva**

Amnesty International has submitted a briefing on torture and ill-treatment of Palestinians by members of the Israeli Defense Forces and the General Security Services to the Committee against Torture (CAT) which is due to discuss the situation in Israel and the Occupied Territories on 14 May 2002.

The Committee against Torture last considered Israel's implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment in November 2001. Amnesty International is concerned that the recommendations made by the CAT then have not been implemented but that the human rights situation has deteriorated.

During the latest large-scale and prolonged Israeli incursions into Palestinian refugee camps and other residential areas, thousands of Palestinians have been arrested, held in prolonged incommunicado detention and subjected to cruel and degrading treatment. The CAT has previously stated that administrative detention without charge or trial, which has recently increased enormously, might constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In its conclusions in November the committee had stated that the policies of house demolition and closures in some instances could amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Amnesty International considers the nature and severity of the suffering inflicted by the systematic practice of house demolitions without absolute military necessity, closures and the use of human shields is so grave that they may amount to torture as defined in Article 1 of the Convention against Torture.

Article 2 of the Convention against Torture states that: "No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture."

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