

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/18/00

31 July 2000

Further information on UA 319/99 (MDE 21/19/99, 15 December 1999) and follow-upS (MDE 21/12/99, 20 December 1999; MDE 21/01/00, 10 January 2000) - Prisoner of conscience/Legal Concern/Incommunicado Detention

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Release of Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem, aged 50, academic

Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem was released unconditionally on 28 July. He thanked Amnesty International for campaigning on his behalf.

The Palestinian Authority detained Dr. Qassem and seven other academics and writers in November 1999, after they signed a statement criticizing the Palestinian political leadership. Amnesty International considered all eight to be prisoners of conscience. Six of them were released a month later, but Dr. Qassem and one other were held until 6 January, when they were released on condition that they sign an undertaking to appear in court if requested, and to pay 50,000 Jordanian Dinars (about \$US 75,000) if they failed to do so.

Dr. Qassem was arrested again on 18 February, and remained in prison without charge or trial even after an order for his release was issued by the Palestinian High Court on 6 July.

No further action is required by the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals on behalf of Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem.