

URGENT ACTION

HUNGER STRIKER NEARS DEATH IN PRISON CLINIC

Hunger-striking Palestinian footballer Mahmoud al-Sarsak is very close to death, but Israeli officials still refuse to allow his admission to a hospital able to provide the care he needs. Administrative detainee Tha'er Halahleh was released on 5 June.

An independent doctor from Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR) was allowed to visit **Mahmoud al-Sarsak** on 6 June for the first time since he began his strike on 19 March. The doctor examined Mahmoud al-Sarsak and another hunger-striking Palestinian detainee also held at the Israel Prison Service (IPS) clinic in Ramleh and found that both their lives are in great danger, and urged that they be admitted immediately to a civilian hospital in order to receive the specialized care they urgently need. Since 6 June, Mahmoud al-Sarsak has been taken to civilian hospitals three times after losing consciousness, but each time he has been returned to the IPS medical facility.

The PHR-Israel doctor reported that he was denied access to Mahmoud al-Sarsak's medical files by the IPS. He found that Mahmoud al-Sarsak had lost a third of his body weight, was frequently passing out, and had memory problems. He was also suffering an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmias), further endangering his life. He continues to be denied contact with his family. Since he was moved to the IPS medical centre, he has only been able to pass occasional messages to his family via delegates of the International Red Cross and lawyers.

Tha'er Halahleh was released on 5 June when his administrative detention order expired after almost two years in prison without charge or trial. He had been on hunger strike for 77 days to protest his detention without trial since 26 June 2010. He ended his hunger strike in a deal with the Israeli authorities on 14 May under which he was promised that if he ended his hunger strike, his administrative detention order would not be renewed. He was taken to a hospital in Hebron immediately after his release.

Please write immediately in Hebrew or your own language:

- Urge the authorities to ensure that Mahmoud al-Sarsak, and any other prisoners on prolonged hunger strikes, are immediately admitted to hospital for urgent specialized medical care which is only available in a civilian hospital;
- Urge them not to submit these men or any other detainee or prisoner to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, such as shackling detainees or prisoners who are or were on hunger strike;
- Call on them to release immediately all administrative detainees, including Mahmoud al-Sarsak and the other four men, unless they are promptly charged with internationally recognizable criminal offences and brought to trial in proceedings that meet international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 JULY 2012 TO:

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

Defence

Ehud Barak

Ministry of Defence

37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia

Tel Aviv 61909, Israel

Fax: +972 3 69 16940 / 62757

Salutation: Dear Minister

Israel Prison Service Commissioner

Lieutenant-General Aharon Franco

Israel Prison Service

P.O. Box 81

Ramleh 72100, Israel

Fax: +972 8 919 3800

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General

And copies to:

Military Advocate General

Brigadier General Danny Efroni

6 David Elazar Street

Hakiryia, Tel Aviv, Israel

Fax: +972 3 569 4526

Email: avimn@idf.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Judge Advocate General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the 3rd update of UA 119/12. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/028/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mahmoud al-Sarsak has been held without charge since 22 July 2009 and has been on hunger strike in protest at his continuing detention without charge since 19 March 2012. A member of the Palestinian national football team from the Gaza Strip, his detention order was last renewed on 1 March 2012. Unlike other administrative detainees on prolonged hunger strikes, he did not reach a deal with the Israeli authorities on 14 May and remained on hunger strike demanding his immediate release. He is held under the Internment of Unlawful Combatants, Law, which Israel currently uses to hold individuals from the Gaza Strip in indefinite administrative detention.

Bilal Diab was arrested on 17 August 2011 and began his hunger strike around 29 February 2012. On several occasions during his hunger strike, he was transferred to Assaf Harofeh hospital for emergency treatment; each time he was shackled and returned to the IPS medical facility at Ramleh within a few hours. A petition against his administrative detention orders was rejected by the Israeli Supreme Court on 7 May. He ended his hunger strike late on 14 May following a deal with the Israeli authorities for his release on 17 August unless “significant new intelligence information” emerges. A doctor from PHR-Israel who visited him on 6 June at the IPS medical facility, where he remains, said that had not been provided with the necessary care during the re-feeding process.

Hassan Safadi was arrested on 29 June 2011 and began his hunger strike around 2 March 2012. On 7 May a doctor from PHR-Israel visited him and confirmed that he had been forcibly injected with fluids containing salt, glucose and other minerals at the beginning of May. A doctor from PHR-Israel visited him on 6 June and noted that his health was improving but that he also had not received adequate medical follow-up for the re-feeding process. He has reportedly been transferred to Hadarim prison, in northern Israel, which has very limited medical facilities.

Omar Abu Shalal was arrested on 15 August 2011 and began his hunger strike on 4 March, also ending it on 14 May. He remains at the IPS medical centre in Ramleh. **Ja’afar Izz al-Din** was arrested on 21 March 2012 and went on hunger strike at the end of that month. On 6 May the Military Court of Appeals rejected his appeal against his administrative detention order. He also ended his strike on 14 May and was subsequently moved out of the IPS medical centre to Ketziot prison, in southern Israel. His administrative detention order expires on 2 July.

On 17 April, an estimated 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees launched a mass hunger strike protesting prison conditions, isolation, denial of family visits and detention without charge or trial. Under the Egyptian-brokered deal of 14 May ending the mass hunger strike, Israel agreed to end the solitary confinement of 19 prisoners – held in isolation for up to 10 years – and to lift a ban on family visits for prisoners from the Gaza Strip, among other things. No family visits for Gaza prisoners are known to have taken place yet and at least one detainee reportedly remains in solitary confinement. Despite media reports suggesting that Israel had agreed that administrative detention orders of current detainees would not be renewed unless significant new intelligence information was presented, Amnesty International has recorded over 30 renewals of orders since the deal was reached, and at least three new orders have been issued. At the end of April, some 308 Palestinians were being held as administrative detainees according to IPS statistics. Some are prisoners of conscience, held solely for their peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association or assembly. For further information, see Amnesty International, *Starved of Justice: Palestinians detained without trial by Israel*, Index: MDE 15/026/2012, 6 June 2012

Names: Bilal Diab, Hassan Safadi, Omar Abu Shalal, Ja’afar Izz al-Din, Mahmoud al-Sarsak

Gender: All male

Further information on UA: 119/12 MDE 15/032/2012 Issue Date: 11 June 2012