

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 15/042/2008

22 October 2008

Further Information on UA 103/08 (MDE 15/034/2008, 18 April 2008) and follow-ups (MDE 15/034/2008, 22 August 2008, and MDE 15/037/2008, 02 September 2008) - Medical Concern

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES/ EGYPT	Muhammad al-Hurani (m), aged 33 Rami al-Arouqi (m), aged 29 Rami al-Masri (m), aged 25 Sameer Taleb (m), aged 47 Bassam al-Oehidi (m), aged 28 Nadira Abu Oweimar (f), aged 29 Mahmud Odeh (m), aged 31 Radi Abu Rida (m), aged 50 Fathi al-Ghouf (m), aged 43 Ayman al-Ladawi (m), aged 35 Ahmad Abu Shawish (m), aged 46 Naser al-Akhras (m), aged 34 Karima Abu Dalal (f), aged 34
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Received authorization to leave: Nufuz Husni (f), aged 44

Condition improved: As'ad al-Qarinawi (m), aged 47

Nufuz Husni, who has cancer, has now received authorization from the Israeli authorities to seek medical treatment in the Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv. On 22 October the Israeli Minister of Defence, Ehud Barak, imposed a total closure on Gaza in response to a home-made projectile fired from the Gaza Strip. However, it is hoped that, in view of her serious medical condition, Nufuz Husni will be able to leave as arranged on 24 October. All the other patients named above, most of whom have been referred to hospitals in Egypt, have not yet received authorization to leave Gaza for medical treatment.

Karima Abu Dalal's condition has dramatically deteriorated and she is now in Shifa Hospital in Gaza, where she is believed to be terminally ill. She has Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymph glands which is curable in more than 90 per cent of cases, but she was denied access to the treatment she needed for several months as Israel refused her a permit to leave Gaza. Karima Abu Dalal applied to leave Gaza in November 2007 for treatment. At the time, a cancer specialist wrote in a report for the Israeli organization Physicians for Human Rights - Israel: "This is a young woman who will die in the absence of treatment and with treatment her chances of recovery are excellent" (underlined in the original). The Israeli security services refused her authorization to leave Gaza for undisclosed security reasons and the Israeli High Court of Justice refused to intervene. Earlier this year she was allowed to travel to Egypt as an exceptional case, but her condition continued to deteriorate. She should now be given authorization to leave so that her medical condition can be assessed in an Israeli hospital and the best treatment to relieve her situation can be given.

Mohammed Abu Amro, who had cancer of the colon, died in October. He had applied for permission to leave Gaza on 26 August to have chemotherapy at the Ichilov Hospital, where he had previously been treated, but the Israeli authorities refused authorization on "security grounds". They gave their approval after he died.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Palestinians have been trapped in Gaza since 9 June 2007, when, after Hamas took power in Gaza, the Israeli authorities, who had previously closed the Erez Crossing to Israel, also closed the Rafah Crossing to Egypt. The Israeli authorities justify denying permits to critically ill patients by claiming that they constitute a "security risk". However, they put no evidence forward to support this claim. (Cuts made here) Under international law, Israel, as the occupying power, must ensure that Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank receive the same extent of medical attention and hospital treatment as their own nationals.

The medical situation in Gaza has recently worsened because of strikes in the medical sector encouraged by Fatah, which opposes Hamas control of Gaza. As a result approximately 25 per cent of health professionals in the Gaza Strip are on strike, and health services, which were already damaged by the blockade, have suffered further. The World Health Organization reported that in the Palestinian Central Drug Stores, where supplies have also been hit by Fatah-Hamas rivalry, 94 essential drugs were out of stock at the beginning of October.

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

To the Israeli authorities:

- expressing grave concern that scores of critically ill patients have been denied passage to access potentially life-saving treatment outside Gaza (include the names listed);
- expressing grave concern that patients are being denied treatment for undisclosed security reasons or unless they agree to become informants;
- stressing that scores of patients, including Mohammed Abu Amro, have died waiting for authorization to leave for treatment, and expressing concern at the deterioration in the condition of other patients, in particular Karima Abu Dalal, whose case Amnesty International has been raising for several months;
- pointing out that under international law, Israel, as the occupying power, has the responsibility to ensure that the population of Gaza has access to medical care to the same extent as Israeli nationals.

APPEALS TO:

Tzipi Livni, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 Yitzhak Rabin Boulevard, Kiryat Ben-Gurion, Jerusalem 91035, Israel

Fax: +972 2 530 3367

Email / website: sar@mfa.gov.il / www.mfa.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Minister

Major General Yoav Galant

General Operational Command (GOC) Southern Command, Military Post 02392, Beer Sheva, IDF, Israel

Fax: +972 8 990 2655

Salutation: Dear Major General

To the Egyptian authorities:

- expressing grave concern that scores of critically ill patients have been denied passage to access potentially life-saving treatment outside Gaza (include the names listed);
- calling on them to work urgently to ensure prompt passage for these and other patients out of Gaza via the Rafah Crossing.

Minister Habib Ibrahim El Adly, Ministry of the Interior, 25 Al-Sheikh Rihan Street, Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +20 22 794 5529

Email: moi@idsc.gov.eg and center@iscmi.gov.eg

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

The Peres Centre for Peace, 2 Hashalom Road, Tel Aviv, 67892, Israel

Fax: + 972 3 5627265

and to diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 December 2008.