

PUBLIC

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22 July 2002

Further information on UA 198/02 (EUR 45/010/2002, 28 June 2002) - Health Concern/Cruel, inhuman treatment

UNITED KINGDOM Mahmoud Abu Rideh (m) aged 31 - Palestinian refugee

On 19 July, the Home Secretary David Blunkett reportedly ordered the transfer of Mahmoud Abu Rideh, a Palestinian refugee and torture victim, from Belmarsh prison in London to Broadmoor Psychiatric Hospital in the South of England. The move could contribute to a further deterioration of Mahmoud Abu Rideh's mental health and increase the already serious risk to his life.

Mahmoud Abu Rideh has been detained since December 2001 without charge under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. He is expected to be moved to Broadmoor some time during the week beginning 22 July. Broadmoor hospital is one of three high security mental hospitals in the UK and holds some of the most dangerous and violent detainees.

Mahmoud Abu Rideh has cut himself repeatedly in prison and is reported to have refused to eat prison food. Amnesty International considers that the placement of Mahmoud Abu Rideh, reportedly against specialist medical advice, in his current condition in a high security mental hospital would constitute cruel and inhuman treatment. It would also violate international standards which require the UK to protect his right to life and to provide him with adequate mental health care.

The Home Secretary has reportedly taken the decision to move Mahmoud Abu Rideh to Broadmoor, despite specialist mental advice. Psychiatrists from Broadmoor had reportedly examined him while in Belmarsh and had recommended that he be sent to a mental hospital which would have a less oppressive regime and which would be nearer to his family.

Mahmoud Abu Rideh is suicidal and has a long history of psychiatric treatment. He had been granted refugee status in the UK as a torture victim. The conditions in which he is being held at Belmarsh prison, have reportedly caused him to experience flashbacks of his torture. Amnesty International has urged that Mahmoud Abu Rideh be moved from the high security prison to a low level secure mental hospital. According to expert medical evidence, he is not a threat to anyone except himself.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals in English or your own language:

- expressing concern about the decision of the Home Secretary to transfer Mahmoud Abu Rideh to Broadmoor Psychiatric Hospital;
- stating that his transfer would constitute cruel and inhuman treatment and would violate international standards which require the UK to protect his right to life and to provide him with adequate mental health care;
- calling for his release from detention at Belmarsh prison and transfer to a low level secure mental hospital near his family where adequate medical care can be provided to him.

APPEALS TO:

Rt Hon David Blunkett MP
Secretary of State for Home Affairs
The Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate

2

London SW1H 9AT
United Kingdom

Telegrams: Home Secretary, London, United Kingdom

Fax: + 44 20 7219 5903

Salutation: Dear Home Secretary

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of the UNITED KINGDOM accredited in your own country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 August 2002.