

**PUBLIC**

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**28 January 2003**

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**Health concern/ill-treatment/detention without charge**

**ISRAEL/  
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

**'Abla Sa'adat (f), aged 47, human rights defender  
Iman Abu Farah (f), aged 24  
Fatma Zayed (f), aged 23**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the well-being of three Palestinian women who are being detained without charge by the Israeli army. They are being held in harsh conditions which amount to ill-treatment. All three women are reportedly in poor health after going on hunger strike in protest at their detention conditions.

Abla Sa'adat, a mother of four and a human rights activist, was arrested on 21 January 2003. She was on her way to Brazil for the World Social Forum as a delegate representing the Palestinian human rights organization Addameer, when she was arrested at the border crossing into Jordan. She was then taken to the Beit El Military Detention Centre (near Ramallah, West Bank), where she was placed in an isolation cell without being questioned. All her personal belongings were taken from her.

Iman Abu Farah and Fatma Zayed, are both fourth year students at the Religious Studies College of al-Quds University in Abu Dis, Jerusalem. They were arrested from their apartment in Um al-Sharayit (a suburb of Ramallah), on 20 January 2003, and also taken to Beit El.

On the evening of 22 January 2003, 'Abla Sa'adat, Iman Abu Farah and Fatma Zayed were all served with four-month administrative detention orders. This is a procedure under which detainees are held without charge or trial. By the detention order, a detainee is given a specific term of detention. On or before the expiry of the term, the detention order is frequently renewed and can be renewed indefinitely.

Beit El Military Detention Centre has no separate facilities for women detainees, and the conditions in which the women are being held raise concerns for their health and well-being. Their isolation cells are small (2 metres x 2.5 metres) and unheated. The female detainees have to share a toilet with male detainees and are allowed to use it only three times a day. There are no separate shower or toilet facilities for men and women. The meals are lacking in adequate nourishment. They are prohibited from walking outside for fresh air and are not allowed a change of clothing. Abla Sa'adat was reportedly not allowed to leave her cell until her lawyer visited her two days after her arrest. Her lawyer claims she had to beg to use the toilet even though she was suffering from diarrhoea. She reportedly also suffers from low blood pressure and a slipped disc, which causes her back pain.

In protest at their detention conditions, the three detainees have been on hunger strike since 23 January 2003. They are refusing to take both food and water and their health is deteriorating. The lawyer who visited the detainees on 26 January, reported that Iman Abu Farah was experiencing extreme dizziness and 'Abla Sa'adat was suffering from severe back and neck pain, and was complaining of numbness in her hands and legs. The lawyer did not see Fatma Zayed, as she had been taken to 'Ofar Military Court for a judicial review to have her administrative detention confirmed. She has reportedly subsequently been transferred to the Moskobiyye Interrogation Centre.

In sworn affidavits, Abla Sa'adat and Iman Abu Farah described the harsh conditions of their arrest, and reaffirmed that they would not end their hunger strike until they were transferred to more adequate facilities for female detainees.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Under administrative detention no criminal charges are filed, and there is no intention of bringing a detainee to trial. Detainees can be held in detention indefinitely. Since the start of the current *intifada* in September 2000, there has been a gradual increase of administrative detainees, from some 30 people in November 2001 to more than 1,000 in January 2003. Since September 2000, two other women have been placed in administrative detention.

All prisoners and detainees should be held in compliance with the principles set out in the Body of Principles for the protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment. Article 8(a) of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states: *Men and women shall so far as possible be detained in separate institutions; in an institution which receives both men and women the whole of the premises allocated to women shall be entirely separate.*

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

- urging the Israeli authorities to immediately and unconditionally release 'Abla Sa'adat, Iman Abu Farah and Fatma Zayed unless they are to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and promptly tried in a proper court of law in accordance with internationally accepted standards for fair trial.
- calling for the three women detainees to be immediately moved to detention facilities that meet the basic minimum standards of detention with separate facilities from the men.
- urging that the three women be given prompt and adequate access to medical care.
- calling for an end to the use of administrative detention.

## **APPEALS TO:**

Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
3 Kaplan Street, P O Box 187  
Jerusalem 91919, Israel

**Fax:** +972 2 6705475

**Telex:** 25279 MPRES IL

**E-mail:** [roh@pmo.gov.il](mailto:roh@pmo.gov.il)

**Salutation:** Dear Prime Minister

Meir Sheerit, Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
29 Salah al-Din Street  
Jerusalem 91010, Israel

**Fax:** +972 2 6285438

**E-mail:** [sar@justice.gov.il](mailto:sar@justice.gov.il)

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

Elyakim Rubinstein, Attorney-General/Legal  
Advisor to the Government  
Ministry of Justice  
29 Salah al-Din Street  
Jerusalem 91010, Israel

**Fax:** +972 2 6285438

**Salutation:** Dear Attorney-General

**COPIES 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 11 March 2003.