

PUBLIC

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MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

Asma Muhammad Suleiman Saba'neh

ISRAEL and the OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Keywords: administrative detainee, disruption of health care

Summary

Asma Muhammad Suleiman Saba'neh, aged 40, arrested on 11 February 2003, and currently held under administrative detention, suffers from headaches and oedema. She has a history of tumours of the brain and has been advised to seek further medical investigation of her condition.

Amnesty International is calling for the release of Asma Saba'neh, unless she is to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence and brought to trial in full accordance with international standards for fair trial. In addition, AI is calling urgently for the Israeli authorities to guarantee her immediate access to appropriate medical investigation and care as required by her condition. Continued administrative detention will almost certainly prevent her pursuing the investigation of her medical problem which could be due to a recurrence of a tumour or to infection. In either case, prompt investigation and treatment is essential.

Arrest

Asma Muhammad Suleiman Saba'neh (ID Card # 985530765), a resident of Jenin refugee camp and mother of six children, was detained by Israeli forces on Tuesday 11 February 2003. At around 2 a.m. on that day some 50 Israeli soldiers entered the house of the Saba'neh family in the Jenin refugee camp. They ordered the family members out and then searched the house. Asma Saba'neh was subsequently detained. Five of her children, aged seven to 18, are being cared for by relatives. Her husband and her eldest son are already being detained – her husband for five months in administrative custody and her son in prison for one year. No explanation has been provided by the authorities for Asma Saba'neh's detention.

Health

Asma Saba'neh was diagnosed and treated for a brain tumour almost ten years ago. She subsequently had surgery at Makhassah Hospital in Jerusalem, where doctors removed the tumour. The tumour was then identified as a slow-growing meningioma. However within five years a tumour was detected in the same location in the skull and she had a further operation in Makhassah Hospital. On this occasion a bone graft was performed to replace bone lost during surgery.

Until a month ago Asma Saba'neh was reportedly symptom-free. However around that time she contacted her doctor complaining of severe headache with a swollen periorbital and frontal region. No diagnosis could be made by X-ray examination and the doctor recommended that she have a CT-scan. However, between the recommendation for investigation and her appointment for a scan, she was detained by Israeli forces.

Administrative detention

Asma Saba'neh is held in administrative detention without charge or trial and without any intention to bring the detainee to trial. The Israeli army uses administrative detention widely against Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. Administrative detention orders are issued by Israeli army commanders usually for periods of 3 to 6 months and can be renewed indefinitely. The administrative detainee and his or her lawyer are not provided with any information or evidence concerning the reason for the detention and hence cannot challenge the detention order or present a defence.

In the past year some 2,000 Palestinians have been placed in administrative detention and some 1,000 are still detained under this procedure. The Israeli army only makes vague and general allegations that the administrative detainee "constitutes a security risk for the area" and claims that the evidence is "secret" and cannot be revealed so as not to compromise the source.

**Medical report for Asma Muhammad Suleiman Saba'neh
Issued at Al-Razi Hospital, 12 February 2003**

To whom it may concern

Mrs Asma' Moh'd Abu El-hajja [married name of Asma Saba'neh]

40 y.o. from Jenin camp, known patient, being operated twice because of brain tumor that proved to be meningioma, which recurred.

At the second operation, a bone graft [was] put in frontal skull. Pt [patient] attended the OPD [out-patients department] recently twice complaining of frontal headache and oedema. [She was] advised to repeat brain CTS [CT scan] to r/o [rule out] tumor recurrence or graft rejection or any other possible complication.

This report is given upon request.

Recommended action

Please send polite appeals using your professional letter-head if possible to the addresses below:

- o saying that you are inquiring about Asma Muhammad Suleiman Saba'neh of Jenin refugee camp (ID no. 985530765)
- o asking for the reasons for her administrative detention by IDF forces and whether she has been charged with an offence
- o expressing your concern for her health because of her history of tumours in the brain and her current headaches and oedema

o urging that she be given prompt access to an appropriate medical facility for the investigation of her headache and to any treatment recommended

o urging that she be immediately released unless she is to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and promptly brought to trial

o asking to be kept informed about her case.

Addresses

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
Salutation: Dear Minister

Elyakim Rubinstein
Attorney-General and Legal Advisor to the Government
Ministry of Justice
29 Salah al-Din Street
Jerusalem 91010, Israel
Fax: +972 2 6285438
Salutation: Dear Attorney-General

Copy

Send a copy of your letter to
Addameer
PO Box 17338
Jerusalem
Israel
Email: addameer@planet.edu

[Addameer is the Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association]

Please also send copies of your appeals to diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply from the government within four weeks of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response, referring to your previous correspondence. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 31 March 2003, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

Monitoring of actions

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter writing actions. If you write one, two or more letters please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters you write e.g. MDE 15/025/2003 – 2 (if you send two letters)

Please send your message to medical@amnesty.org
Thank you