

15 March 1999

Further information on EXTRA 18/99 (MDE 15/15/99, 9 February 1999) - Torture and ill-treatment / Legal concern

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIESJihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh, student, Palestinian

On Wednesday 10 March 1999 Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh's detention was renewed for a further eight days.

Jihad Shehadeh has been kept under interrogation by Israel's General Security Service (GSS) since 7 February, and his detention order has already been renewed several times.

He is still being subjected to sleep deprivation and *shabeh* (a method of torture where detainees are shackled, hooded, to a small chair for hours while loud disorientating music is played) and his interrogators have reportedly threatened to get his administrative detention order renewed (see Background Information).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh was arrested in August 1997 under an administrative detention order, a procedure by which detainees are held without charge or trial for a renewable period of up to six months on the orders of a military commander.

For years, Amnesty International has expressed concern that secret Israeli guidelines, authorized by the 1987 Landau Report, allow the use of torture or ill-treatment, which the report calls "moderate physical pressure". In October 1994 a special ministerial committee said that "increased physical pressure" could be used during interrogation.

GSS officers have admitted in court to subjecting detainees to prolonged sleep deprivation and forcing them to sit, stand or squat in painful positions for long periods of time. Violent shaking (*tiltul*), which may cause brain damage, has also been used, but must be authorized by the head of the GSS.

The Committee against Torture and a UN Special Rapporteur on Torture have described many of these practices as "methods of torture" as defined in the UN Convention against Torture. The Israeli government, however, denies they constitute torture.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Please continue sending telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Hebrew, English or your own language:

- asking the Israeli authorities whether *shabeh* has been used on Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh and reminding them that this practice constitutes torture, in breach of the Convention against Torture to which Israel is a State Party;
- asking that the use of any interrogation methods which constitute torture or ill-treatment cease immediately;
- calling for the release of Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh if he is not to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a fair trial according to international standards;

- reminding the government of Israel of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

APPEALS TO:

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Prime Minister
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Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Mr Tzahi Hanegbi
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Ministry of Justice
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Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Avigdor Kahalani
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Ministry of Internal Security
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COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.