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PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ASKS FOR FULL PUBLIC  
INQUIRY INTO DEATH OF DETAINEE

The Palestinian Authority should ensure that a Commission of Inquiry announced into last night's death of Rashid Fityani in Jericho Prison be independent and impartial and that its methodology, findings and recommendations promptly be made public, Amnesty International said today.

"After the failure of so many commissions of inquiry into human rights abuses, only a speedy, full and public report of this commission's findings will allay fears of yet another cover-up," the human rights organization said.

Rashid Fityani was at first said by official sources to have been killed while trying to escape. A security spokesman later said Rashid Fityani got into an argument with one of the guards late Tuesday "*which led to a fistfight and then to gunfire*" during which he was killed. According to hospital sources, Rashid Fityani had been hit by 13 bullets.

The guard involved is said to have been arrested. Saeb Erekat, Minister of Local Administration, has condemned the shooting and the head of the Legislative Council's Human Rights Commission has said that the Legislative Council will also order a Commission of Inquiry.

Rashid Fityani was originally arrested on 15 January 1995, together with his brother-in-law, Salman Jalayteh. They were accused of being "collaborators" with the Israeli security forces and of having participated in the killing of Ibrahim Yaghi the previous month. Both men were severely tortured after their arrest by methods including electric shocks and continuous beating with cables. Salman Jalayteh died, apparently as a result of the torture, but no satisfactory inquiry was made into his death in custody. Rashid Fityani and others accused in the same case were brought before the military court, but their trial was repeatedly adjourned and they have still not been tried. These events were raised in an Amnesty International report made public in May 1995.

Amnesty International issued a report two days ago on the worrying increase in human rights abuses under the Palestinian Authority. The organization stated that a climate of fear and an atmosphere of impunity was preventing victims from speaking out and is renewing its call for practical action to end human rights abuses.

"After some of the most flagrant abuses of human rights, the Palestinian Authority has announced an investigation or an inquiry. On no occasion is the report of any investigation or inquiry known to have been published or even made available to victims or human rights organizations; usually no report is even known to have been made," Amnesty International said in its report.

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For further information, please refer to Amnesty International reports:

*Palestinian Authority: Prolonged political detention and torture, 2 December 1996;*  
*Israel and the Occupied Territories including the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian*  
*Authority: Human rights: a year of shattered hopes, May 1995.*