

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture/ Legal Concern

24 August 2001

ISRAEL

Muna 'Ubayd (f), 30, teacher
Akram 'Ubayd (m), 42, bank employee (her brother)

Muna 'Ubayd and her brother Akram 'Ubayd, who are Palestinian citizens of Israel, were arrested on 10 and 12 August respectively. They are held incommunicado. Amnesty International fears that they may be tortured in custody.

They were apparently arrested by the General Security Service, and are now held at the detention centre at Petah Tikvah. At least one of them has reportedly been tortured already. Muna 'Ubayd has apparently been beaten and deprived of sleep while held in a painful position. She was apparently taken to hospital as a result of the treatment she suffered, without her family being allowed to see her.

On 23 August a judge extended their detention for a further five days, ordering that a doctor examine Muna 'Ubayd. She was apparently brought before a court yesterday. The Israeli authorities have issued gagging orders on their lawyer and family to prevent them talking to journalists or human rights organisations. Amnesty International fears that the detainees may be held as hostages in connection with Israeli hostages held by the Lebanese armed Islamic group *Hizbullah*.

After they were arrested the police searched their house in Taybeh, south of Nazareth, seizing mobile phones and damaging furniture. Their brother Kamel 'Ubayd was arrested on 22 August but released the following day.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In October 2000 *Hizbullah* abducted an Israeli said to have been a former intelligence agent, Elhanan Tenenboim. They also captured three Israeli soldiers. *Hizbullah* have held them, apparently as hostages, without access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and without even providing evidence as to whether they are alive or dead. They are believed to be held as hostages to be exchanged for Lebanese detained in Israel, in particular for Shaikh 'Abd al-Karim 'Ubayd, abducted by Israel in South Lebanon in 1988, and Mustafa al-Dirani, abducted from South Lebanon in 1994. Mustafa al-Dirani was said to have held Israeli airman Ron Arad, an Israeli navigator missing in action, prisoner from 1988-9. Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim al-'Ubayd and Mustafa Dirani have been held ever since their capture in administrative detention in Israel without having ever been charged or tried. On 23 August the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that they should both have access to the ICRC, which they had previously been denied.

Kamel 'Ubayd and two other members of his family had been detained on 17 October 2000 and held for about a month. The detention was apparently on suspicion that his brother in Europe had given information to *Hizbullah* to facilitate the kidnapping of Elhanan Tenenboim. Kamel 'Ubayd was arrested again on 25 January and held for six months on an "administrative detention" order, which allows the Israeli authorities to detain people without charge or trial for an indefinite period. In custody Kamel was allegedly beaten, deprived of sleep during 24 hours of continuous interrogation, subjected to extreme temperatures and excessive noise levels and his handcuffs so severely tightened that he apparently now has infected tissue. He was released on 6 August but put under "town arrest": he cannot leave his house from 7pm to 6am and has to report to the police in Taybeh twice a week.

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

- asking for Muna and Akram 'Ubayd to be immediately and unconditionally released if they are not to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence
- expressing concern at reports that Muna and Kamel 'Ubayd have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated during interrogation, and calling for all those

mentioned above to be treated humanely and given immediate access to lawyers, family and independent doctors;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all those held as hostages in Israel;
- reminding the Israeli authorities that Amnesty International is concerned about the fate of Israeli nationals who have been held as hostages and is campaigning on their behalf.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street, PO Box 187
Kiryat Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem 91919, via Israel
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Fax: + 972 2 651 2631
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Uzi Landau
Minister of Public Security
Ministry of Public Security (Police)
Kiryat Hamemshala
PO Box 18182
Jerusalem 91181, via Israel
Fax: + 972 2 584 7872
Salutation: Dear Minister of Public Security

Meir Shetrit
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
29 Salah al-Din Street
Jerusalem 91010, via Israel
Fax: + 972 2 628 8618
Salutation: Dear Minister of Justice

Elyakim Rubinstein
Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
29 Salah al-Din Street
Jerusalem 91010, via Israel
Fax: + 972 2 628 5438
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 6 October 2001.