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@Incommunicado detention of political prisoners

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Amnesty International is concerned about the detention of '**Ata Abu al-Rushtah**, Official Spokesperson of the Liberation Party in Jordan (LPJ), and **Bakr Salem al-Khawalidah**, President of the party's Cultural Committee, who were arrested in al-Russeifeh late on the night of 20 May 1993. It is also concerned about the continued incommunicado detention of **Saleh Muhammad 'Abd al-Qader Qazan**, arrested on 27 April 1993. All three are held incommunicado at the General Intelligence Department (GID) Headquarters in Amman.

1. The cases of '**Ata Abu al-Rushtah** and **Bakr Salem al-Khawalidah**

In response to Amnesty International's expression of concern, and request for information, the GID has indicated that '**Ata Abu al-Rushtah** and **Bakr al-Khawalidah** are being detained by order of the prosecutor of the State Security Court on suspicion of conspiring to change the Jordanian Constitution by illegal means. If they are charged with such an offence and brought to trial, according to Articles 136 and 139 of the Jordanian penal code they would face a mandatory death sentence.

Requests for visits by relatives have been rejected. As of 10 June, to Amnesty International's knowledge, no visits by either relatives or lawyers had taken place. According to Article 66 of the Jordanian code of criminal procedure, a prosecutor may prohibit all contacts with a detained suspect for renewable periods not exceeding 10 days at a time. Lawyers would be allowed to examine the records of the interrogation sessions afterwards.

'Ata Abu al-Rushtah was previously arrested in Jordan in March 1984 and sentenced to three years' imprisonment by the Martial Law Court for membership of an illegal organization. He was released in 1985, but was rearrested in July 1987 and sentenced again by the Martial Law Court to another term of three years for membership of an illegal organization. He was released under a royal pardon in 1989. He was last arrested and held for one day on 24 January 1991 after a press conference in Amman on the Gulf war.

Bakr al-Khawalidah was held for two weeks in November 1990 and released on bail while on trial by the ordinary criminal courts for membership of an illegal organization. The Criminal Court of Amman convicted and sentenced him in April 1992 to three months' imprisonment, confirmed by the Court of Appeal in May 1992 and commuted to a fine. In October 1991, while the above proceedings were taking place, Bakr al-Khawalidah was detained and brought to trial for the same offence before the State Security Court. In June 1992 he was sentenced to a one year prison term and was eventually released in July 1992.

Amnesty International believes that both **'Ata Abu al-Rushtah** and **Bakr al-Khawalidah** may be held for a capital offence solely for their non-violent political activities, in which case they should be released immediately and unconditionally. Otherwise they should be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial. They should also be allowed regular access to lawyers and relatives without further delay.

2. The case of **Saleh Muhammad 'Abd al-Qader Qazan**

Amnesty International is also concerned at the continued incommunicado detention of **Saleh Muhammad 'Abd al-Qader Qazan**, arrested on 27 April 1993 and also held at the GID Headquarters in Amman. The GID has informed Amnesty International that he is detained by order of the prosecutor of the State Security Court on suspicion of forming an armed group, having contacts with a foreign country and working towards changing the Jordanian Constitution. Amnesty International is urging that he be allowed access to his relatives and a lawyer without further delay. He should be promptly charged and brought to trial on recognizably criminal charges or released.

3. Summary of Amnesty International concerns

Amnesty International welcomed the total lifting of the state of emergency in Jordan in April 1992 and the introduction of the right of appeal before the State Security Court in April 1993. However, it remains concerned about the detention of political opponents who may be prisoners of conscience and about the practice of prolonged incommunicado detention which prevents access to detainees under interrogation in the GID by lawyers and relatives.

Amnesty International calls for the release of any prisoner of conscience and for a thorough review of the legislation and practice relating to interrogation procedures in Jordan. It also opposes the death penalty under all circumstances.

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