

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/03/00

UA 50/00

Prisoner

**PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Dr. 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem, aged 50, academic**

Palestinian police arrested Dr. 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem at his home in Nablus on 18 February. He is now held in a police station in Jericho, where his lawyer and family have not been allowed to visit him. Amnesty International believes his arrest was politically motivated, and considers him a prisoner of conscience, detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Dr. 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem is a professor of political science at al-Najah University, in Nablus. He was arrested last November, together with eight other prominent Palestinians, for signing a statement criticizing the Palestinian political leadership (see UA 319/99, MDE 21/19/99, 15 December 1999, and follow-ups: MDE 21/21/99, 20 December 1999, and MDE 21/01/00, 10 January 2000). His files, documents and his computer were confiscated and he was later interrogated by the Attorney General of the State Security Court, Khalid al-Qidrah. He was held for nearly six weeks at the General Intelligence Centre in Jericho, and only released without charge on 6 January after he signed an undertaking to appear in court if requested, and to pay 50,000 Jordanian dinars (about US\$75,000) if he failed to do so.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:**

- stating that Amnesty International considers Dr 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem to be a prisoner of conscience detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- seeking assurances that he is being well treated;
- asking that he be granted immediate access to his family and lawyer;
- requesting details of the reason for his arrest and whether he has been charged or brought before a court in connection with a particular offence;
- asking the Palestinian Authority not to detain anyone for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

**APPEALS TO:**

President Yasser Arafat  
Palestinian Authority  
Office of the President  
The Beach Forum  
Gaza City  
Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: President Arafat, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**

**Faxes: + 972 7 282 2365 (when voice answers, please request fax tone)**

**Salutation: Dear President Arafat**

Brigadier General Ghazi Jabali  
Head of the Palestinian Police  
Police Headquarters  
Gaza City  
Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: Brigadier General Jabali, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**

**Faxes: + 972 282 2335 (when voice answers, please request fax tone)**

**Salutation: Dear President Arafat**

Advocate Zuheir Sourani  
Attorney General  
Palestinian Authority  
Attorney General Building  
Yarmouk, Gaza, Palestinian Authority  
**Telegrams: Attorney General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**  
**Faxes: + 972 7 282 4502**  
**Salutation: Dear Advocate Sourani**

**COPIES TO:**

Hasan Khreisheh  
Chairman of the Human Rights Committee  
Palestinian Legislative Council  
P O Box 1930 Ramallah  
Palestinian Authority

and to representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)  
accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 April 2000.