

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/006/2001

UA 115/01

"Disappea

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Yusuf Samir, journalist, aged 63

Journalist Yusuf Samir was arrested by Palestinian Police on 4 April. The authorities reportedly claimed to have released him later that day, but he has not been seen since. Amnesty International believes he may have "disappeared", and is concerned for his safety. He has a heart condition, and requires regular medication.

Palestinian Police reportedly stopped Yusuf Samir and his wife in Bethlehem on the afternoon of 4 April, took him to a police station and questioned him about his Israeli passport. Yusuf Samir is an Israeli citizen, but was born in Egypt.

According to his family, former Israel Radio correspondent Yusuf Samir was annoyed that the police had questioned his integrity as an Arab journalist, and he returned to the police station with books and poems from his home to prove his support for the Palestinian cause.

His wife has said that he telephoned her later that afternoon at home in Beit Jala, and asked her to bring his medicine for his heart condition to Bethlehem, and his gun, which he carried for protection. He told her that two Palestinian General Intelligence (*mukhabarat*) officers would meet her. Two *mukhabarat* officers in plain clothes met her in Bethlehem, and took the gun and the medicine from her. She returned home, and the next day she was told that her husband had been released the previous night. Since then she and the rest of Yusuf Samir's family have heard nothing from him.

Amnesty International wrote to the Palestinian Authority regarding Yusuf Samir on 2 May, but has received no reply.

In a 14 April press statement to Voice of Palestine Radio, the director of the Public Intelligence Department in the West Bank said that his officers had questioned Yusuf Samir on 4 April and released him that night.

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

- urging the authorities to investigate the "disappearance" of Yusuf Samir and take urgent action to discover his whereabouts;
- expressing concern for his safety, in particular because he needs regular medication for a heart condition;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the police and security forces adhere to international standards for the treatment of people in custody.

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
Office of the President
The Beach Forum
Gaza City
Palestinian Authority
Fax: + 972 8 282 2366

Freih Abu Middein
Minister of Justice
P O Box 1021

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Gaza
Palestinian Authority
Fax: + 972 8 286 7109/197

Advocate Zuheir Sourani
Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
Yarmouk
Gaza
Palestinian Authority
Fax: + 972 3 697 6218

Brigadier General Tawfik al-Tirawi
Head of the General Intelligence (West Bank)
Ramallah
Palestinian Authority
Fax: + 972 2 232 1283

COPIES TO:

Mr Qadura Fares
Chairman of the Human Rights and Monitoring Committee
Palestinian Legislative Council
P O Box 1930 Ramallah
Palestinian Authority
Fax: + 972 2 298 7629

and to diplomatic representatives of the Palestinian Authority accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 June 2001.