

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/010/2002

UA 207/02

Fear of t

PALESTINIAN Khaidar Ghanem (m), aged 39, human rights defender

AUTHORITY

Khaidar Ghanem was arrested in the Gaza Strip on 3 July by the Palestinian Preventative Security forces. He is being held in incommunicado detention in Tel al-Hawa prison in Gaza. He is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. There are also concerns that he may not receive a fair trial if he is charged and brought to court.

As a human rights field researcher for the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, Khaidar Ghanem collects testimonies from Palestinian residents in the Rafah area of the Gaza Strip, where he also lives. In the course of his work, Ghanem may have uncovered information that could cause discomfort to the Palestinian Authority.

He has apparently been accused of being a "collaborator", but it is feared he has been arrested in connection with his work for B'Tselem, possibly in order to deter other human rights workers from carrying out their legitimate work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Palestinians suspected of "collaboration" with Israel have frequently been arrested, held incommunicado and tortured by the Palestinian Authority security services. Scores of suspected "collaborators" are believed to be detained, without charge or trial, in the areas under the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Gaza and the West Bank.

Many of those accused of "collaboration" by the Palestinian Authority have been held without charge or trial for up to seven years. Others have been sentenced to death by the Palestinian State Security Court in grossly unfair trials which violate the fundamental principles of due process.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Khaidar Ghanem, and asking the authorities to ensure he is not tortured or ill-treated in custody;
- asking for Khaidar Ghanem to be immediately and unconditionally released if he is not to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence;
- expressing concern that Khaidar Ghanem is being held incommunicado, and reminding the Palestinian authorities that while he is in custody, he has the right of access to his lawyer and family;
- calling on the authorities to investigate reports that other detainees have been tortured or ill-treated during interrogation, and urging the authorities to ensure that all those in detention are treated according to international standards.

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
The President's Office, Gaza,
Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: President Arafat, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Fax: + 972 8 2 822 159

Salutation: Dear President Arafat

Freih Abu Middein
Minister of Justice
P O Box 1021
Gaza

Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Fax: + 972 8 286 7109 (it may be difficult to get through, but please keep trying)

Salutation: Dear Minister

Abd el Razik Yihya
Minister of the Interior
Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Fax: + 972 2 2400668

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

B'Tselem

The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

8 Hata'asiya St.

Jerusalem 93420

Israel

Fax: + 972 2 6749111

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 19 August 2002.