

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 21/12/98

UA 147/98 Torture / Legal concern / Medical concern

11 May 1998

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY' Abbas al-Mu'mani, photographer

Amnesty International has received reports that the Palestinian Authority's General Intelligence Service has used torture against 'Abbas al-Mu'mani, a freelance photographer who works as a stringer for Reuters. The organization fears that he may be subjected to further torture and ill-treatment in detention.

On 5 May 1998, two armed officers from the General Intelligence Service arrested 'Abbas al-Mu'mani at his office in Ramallah in the West Bank without a warrant. He was held incommunicado until 10 May, without access to lawyers and family members. During his detention General Intelligence officers reportedly tortured him by hanging him from the ceiling. He was hit with cables and cut all over his body. He was denied sleep and food and not allowed to use the toilet for the first five days of his detention. During this period he was forced to remain in *shabeh* (painful positions).

On the morning of 10 May 'Abbas al-Mu'mani escaped from a General Intelligence Detention Centre by jumping out of a third floor window, reportedly breaking his leg as a result. He was rearrested in the evening of the same day and returned to the custody of the General Intelligence. Since his rearrest he has been held incommunicado, prompting concern that he may be subjected to further torture and ill-treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 8 April 1998, the news agency Reuters broadcast a video cassette in which 'Adel Awadallah, accused by the Palestinian Authority of participating in the killing of *Hamas* leader Muhi al-Din al-Sharif on 29 March 1998, charged the Palestinian Authority with responsibility for the assassination. The Palestinian Authority is reportedly holding 'Abbas al-Mu'mani with the aim of extracting information about how this video cassette was delivered to Reuters and about his knowledge of 'Adel Awadallah's whereabouts.

Amnesty International has received other reports of systematic torture inflicted by the Palestinian Authority's Preventive Security Service on more than 30 alleged members of *Hamas*, arrested in Ramallah since 29 March 1998 (see UA 116/98 and follow-up).

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

- asking for assurances that 'Abbas al-Mu'mani is being well treated and is receiving adequate medical treatment;
- requesting that he be allowed immediate access to a lawyer of his choice and to family members;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a fair and prompt trial;
- urging that the Palestinian Authority open an impartial investigation into allegations that the General Intelligence Service tortured 'Abbas al-Mu'mani;
- requesting that the Palestinian Authority bring to justice any persons found to have inflicted torture, respecting their right to receive a fair and prompt trial.

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat

Palestinian Authority

Al-Muntada

Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: President Arafat, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Faxes: + 972-7-822365 (ask to send a fax)

Salutation: Dear President Arafat

Mr Freih Abu Meddein

Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice

Abu Khadra Building

Omar al-Mukhtar Street

Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Faxes: + 972-7-867109

Salutation: Dear Minister

Brigadier General Tawfiq al-Tirawi

Head of General Intelligence in the West Bank

Jericho, Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Tirawi, General Intelligence, Jericho

Faxes: + 972-2-992 1283

Salutation: Dear Brigadier General al-Tirawi

COPIES TO:

Al-Damir

P.O. Box 17338

Jerusalem

Via Israel

Faxes: + 972 2 656 2967

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 June 1998.