

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/21/99

20 December 1999

Further information on UA 319/99 (MDE 21/19/99, 15 December 1999) - Prisoners of conscience / Legal concern and new concern: Fear of torture or ill-treatment

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Dr. 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem, aged 50, Professor of
Political Science
Ahmad Shakr Dudin, aged 58, retired teacher

Released: Dr Yasser Fayege Abu Safieh, aged 45, physician
Dr 'Afif Suleiman al-Judeh, aged 45, physician
Dr 'Abd al-Rahim Kittani, aged 47
Dr 'Adel Samara (corrected spelling), aged 57, economist
Ahmad Qatamesh, aged 46, writer and political activist
Adnan Odeh, director of the research unit of the Palestinian Legislative Council

On 19 December 1999, the six academics and writers above were released from detention.

Ahmad Qatamesh and Dr 'Adel Samara, who were never interrogated throughout their detention, were released without charge. The others were released on bail without charge after they signed an undertaking, drawn up by Khaled al-Qidreh, the public prosecutor of the State Security Court, that they would report for further interviews if required and that if they failed to do so they would be liable to pay 50,000 Jordanian Dinars (\$US 75,000).

Ahmad Shakr Dudin has apparently been transferred to the General Intelligence detention centre in Jericho where Dr 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem is also held. Amnesty International has been informed that Ahmad Shakr Dudin's family have been allowed to see him on only one occasion.

The men were arrested on 28 and 29 November after signing a statement which criticized the Palestinian political leadership and accused them of corruption and abuse of power. Amnesty International is concerned that the two men still in detention might be ill-treated in detention and receive a grossly unfair trial before the State Security Court.

On 16 December, General Intelligence officers brutally assaulted one of the other signatories to the statement, 'Abd al-Jawwad Saleh, aged 70, a well-known member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and former minister. He had been taking part in a demonstration outside the General Intelligence's detention centre in Jericho to protest at the detention of Ahmad Qatamesh, Dr 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem and 'Adel Samara. When he was invited into the detention centre, ostensibly to meet the director, a group of General Intelligence officers allegedly attacked him, punching him in the face and the rest of his body and then throwing water over him and throwing him out again. He had to be taken to hospital to be treated for bruising and cuts

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

- saying that you consider Dr 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem and Ahmad Shakr Dudin to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release;

- expressing concern that they are being detained under the jurisdiction of the State Security Court, where trials have consistently been summary and grossly unfair;
- seeking assurances that Dr 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem and Ahmad Shakr Dudin are being well treated and have immediate and continuing access to their families and lawyers;
- calling for the lifting of all conditions imposed upon the release of Dr Yasser Fayege Abu Safieh, Dr 'Afif Suleiman al-Judeh, Dr 'Abd al-Rahim Kittani and Adnan Odeh;
- calling for a prompt, impartial and independent investigation into allegations that 'Abd al-Jawwad Saleh was beaten by General Intelligence Officers;
- urging the authorities to bring to justice in a fair trial, consistent with international standards, anyone against whom evidence is found that they assaulted 'Abd al-Jawwad Saleh.

President Yasser Arafat

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Office of the President
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Palestinian Authority

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Salutation: Dear President Arafat

Advocate Zuheir Sourani
Attorney General
Palestinian Authority
Attorney General Building
Yarmouk, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Attorney General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza via Israel

Faxes: + 972 7 282 4502

Salutation: Dear Mr Sourani

Brigadier-General Tawfiq Tirawi
General Intelligence Centre
Jericho
Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: General Tirawi, General Intelligence, Jericho

Faxes: + 972 2 232 1283

Salutation: Dear Brigadier-General

COPIES TO:

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Palestinian Legislative Council
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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 26 January 2000.