

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/23/98

UA 266/98 Fear of torture or ill-treatment / Possible prisoner of

conscience

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Jamal al-Tawil, human rights activist

There are fears that Jamal al-Tawil, who has been held in incommunicado detention at the hands of the Palestinian General Intelligence (*mukhabarat*) since 7 October 1998, is at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Jamal al-Tawil was arrested at his home by five armed members of the security forces on 6 October. No arrest warrant was produced and no reason was given for his arrest. A house search by the officers resulted in the confiscation of various of his belongings, including computer discs, videotapes, books and papers.

Jamal al-Tawil was initially taken to the General Intelligence's Ramallah detention centre where his wife was permitted to visit him on the day of his arrest. He reportedly had not been interrogated at that point and had still not been informed of the reason for his arrest.

The following day Jamal al-Tawil was transferred to Jneid Prison in Nablus. On 8 October he was again transferred, to a General Intelligence detention centre in Jericho.

Amnesty International would consider Jamal al-Tawil to be a possible prisoner of conscience if detained for the peaceful expression of his views and as a result of his human rights work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jamal al-Tawil has been actively involved in human rights work on behalf of those held prisoner in both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. He was recently questioned by the Palestinian security forces regarding his activities for those held by the Palestinian Authority.

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

- seeking assurances that Jamal al-Tawil is not being tortured or ill-treated whilst being held incommunicado at the General Intelligence's detention centre in Jericho;
- enquiring as to the reason for his arrest on 6 October 1998 and his continuing detention;
- requesting that he be granted immediate and continuing access to his lawyer and to family members;
- asking for his immediate and unconditional release if he is only held for the peaceful expression of his views and his human rights activities;
- reminding the Palestinian Authority of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 19: "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression and opinion."

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
Palestinian Authority
Al-Muntada
Gaza
Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: President Arafat, Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Faxes: + 972-7-282-2365 (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: + 972-7-286-7109
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: + 972-2-232-1283
Salutation: Dear Brigadier General al-Tirawi

COPIES TO: representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 November 1998.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression and opinion."

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>