

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 63/06 (MDE 15/023/2006, 17 March 2006) Legal concern/incommunicado detention

ISRAEL

Hundreds of detainees

Following hearings which took place on 20 and 22 March, the Israeli government abandoned attempts to speedily enact a new law which would grant security forces extended power to hold those suspected of “security” offences in prolonged incommunicado detention.

The Israeli government had been seeking to rush the law, known as Law 5765 – 2005, through parliament before the forthcoming elections, scheduled for 28 March. On 19 March the government agreed to drop the discriminatory provision contained in the initial draft of the law, which stipulated that the law only applied to non-citizens and non-residents, and reduced the maximum time of incommunicado detention without access to a lawyer from 50 to 30 days. However, attempts to recall the Knesset (parliament) from pre-election recess for an emergency plenary session to vote on the draft law failed. The draft law will not be put to the vote for now.

No more appeals are required at present. Amnesty International will monitor the situation and take action as appropriate if renewed attempts are made to pass this law after the elections.