

22 March 1999

Further information on EXTRA 18/99 (MDE 15/15/99, 9 February 1999) and follow-up (MDE 15/28/99, 15 March 1999) - Torture and ill-treatment / Legal concern

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIESJihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh, student, Palestinian

Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh was released on bail without charge on Tuesday 16 March 1999. He had been under interrogation by Israel's General Security Service (GSS) since 7 February.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh was arrested in August 1997 under an administrative detention order, a procedure by which detainees are held without charge or trial for a renewable period of up to six months on the orders of a military commander.

For years, Amnesty International has expressed concern that secret Israeli guidelines, authorized by the 1987 Landau Report, allow the use of torture or ill-treatment, which the report calls "moderate physical pressure". In October 1994 a special ministerial committee said that "increased physical pressure" could be used during interrogation.

GSS officers have admitted in court to subjecting detainees to prolonged sleep deprivation and forcing them to sit, stand or squat in painful positions for long periods of time. Violent shaking (*tiltul*), which may cause brain damage, has also been used, but must be authorized by the head of the GSS.

The Committee against Torture and a UN Special Rapporteur on Torture have described many of these practices as "methods of torture" as defined in the UN Convention against Torture. The Israeli government, however, denies they constitute torture.

No further action is required by the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals on behalf of Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh. Your support was very valuable and boosted his morale.