

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

News Flash

AI Index: MDE 15/057/2004 (Public)
News Service No: 133
27 May 2004

Israel: British journalist arrested

Statement by Amnesty International's Donatella Rovera on the arrest in Jerusalem of Peter Hounam, the British journalist who published details in the Sunday Times of Israel's secret nuclear programme in 1986 based on information he received from Mordechai Vanunu:

"At 9:30 last night, I was sitting in the garden of the Jerusalem Hotel with a colleague. Peter Hounam was brought into the garden by five plain-clothes members of the security forces or police. As they were going to take him into the hotel, he broke away from them and ran over to my table. He looked very concerned and just had the time to tell me: 'I am being arrested, please tell the Sunday Times, please let people know.'"

"The five members of the security forces grabbed him and immediately pulled him away. He didn't have the chance to say anything else."

"He was taken upstairs to his room and, after 20 minutes, they brought him back down. They were carrying his bags, they took him outside and there was one police vehicle with security forces in uniform and two plain white cars. Plain-clothes officers put him in one plain car and the three cars drove off."

The Israeli authorities have apparently confirmed to the British Foreign Office that they are detaining a British national.

Donatella Rovera is currently in Israel on a research mission for Amnesty International, collecting information and testimony on alleged human rights violations.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>