

PUBLIC

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Fear of imminent execution

13 June 2005

**PALESTINIAN
AUTHORITY (PA)**

30 to 50 Prisoners on Death Row

Amnesty International is concerned that between 30 and 50 prisoners who are held on death row in Palestinian Authority (PA) prisons are at risk of execution. On 12 June, PA President Mahmoud Abbas authorized the execution of four prisoners. These were the first executions to be carried out by the PA since August 2002.

Wa'el Sha'ban al-Shoubaki, Salah Khalil Musallam, and 'Oda Muhammad Abu 'Azab, had been sentenced to death in 1995 and 1996 for murder. A fourth man, Muhammad Daoud al-Khawaja, had been sentenced to death for murder in 2000 by the State Security Court, which has since been abolished and where trials were notoriously unfair.

According to PA officials, the PA President, Mahmoud Abbas, ordered the resumption of executions in response to increased crime and lawlessness in areas of the Occupied Territories which fall under PA jurisdiction. It is feared that more executions will be carried out in the near future.

More than 60 people have been sentenced to death since the establishment of the PA in 1994. To date nine of those sentenced to death have been executed and several others have been killed unlawfully by armed individuals, some inside the prisons and others after they had escaped from prison. Between 30 and 50 prisoners remain on death row.

Many of those on death row were sentenced to death after unfair trials in the State Security Court, in military courts or in other courts. Most were convicted of murder, abduction or rape, and others were convicted of collaborating with Israeli intelligence agents to assassinate other Palestinians.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic or English or your own language:

- urging PA President Abbas not to ratify any more death sentences;
- urging that all those who were sentenced to death by the State Security Court or in unfair trials by other courts be re-tried in compliance with international standards for fair trial;;
- noting that, while recognizing the PA's right and responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of recognizably criminal offences, Amnesty International is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate violation of the right to life, and pointing out that no convincing evidence has ever been produced that the death penalty is a more effective deterrent than any other punishment.

APPEALS TO: (As the postal service is unreliable please send faxes and/or emails)

President

President Mahmoud Abbas

Office of the President

Palestinian Authority

Fax: +972 8 282 2365 (If someone answers ask for a fax tone)

Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Justice

Farid al-Jallad

Ministry of Justice

Palestinian Authority

Fax: +972 8 2829286/ + 972 8 282 9197/ + 972 2 240 9472

Email: diwan@hally.net
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Nasser al-Qudwa

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Fax: + 972 8 286 8971/ + 972 2 240 3772

Email: mofaweb@gov.ps

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the Palestinian Authority accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 July 2005.