

UA 194/00

**PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY** Raji Saqir, 29

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Ahlam Duqmaq was killed in a family dispute on 1 July. Raji Saqir was put on trial on the night of 2 July and sentenced to death for the murder of Ahlam Duqmaq the next day. The proceedings, before the State Security Court, did not meet even minimum standards for fair trial.

President Yasser Arafat has the power to commute the death sentence, which has been passed to him for ratification, or order a retrial.

Raji Saqir and those tried with him were not given sufficient time to organize their defence and are not entitled to appeal against the verdict to a higher court. Amnesty International has called for a halt to the operation of the State Security Court because it is inherently incapable of providing the guarantees for a fair trial.

Of those tried together with Raji Saqir, Jamal al-'Azzeq was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment with hard labour, and six months' imprisonment for illegal possession of weapons, while Walid Saqir was acquitted. Another man, Ibrahim Saqir, was tried *in absentia*, found guilty but not sentenced.

The Palestinian Authority has executed three people in the past two years, most recently in February 1999. On each occasion trials were summary and grossly unfair, and those convicted were executed shortly after the trial.

Although Amnesty International recognizes the role of governments in bringing the perpetrators of crime to justice, this must be done through a fair and just legal system. The organization is opposed to the death penalty as the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and a violation of the right to life.

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

- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crimes and their families and acknowledging the role of governments in bringing the perpetrators to justice;
- expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty, which is the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and which is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- expressing concern that the trial before the State Security Court of Raji Saqir, Jamal al-'Azzeq, Walid Saqir and Ibrahim Saqir was unfair, as the defendants were not given sufficient time to present their defence and were denied the right to appeal against the verdicts to a higher court, in violation of international human rights standards;
- urging President Yasser Arafat to commute the death sentence imposed on Raji Saqir, and to order a retrial for him and the other defendants with full respect for fair trial standards enshrined in international law;
- urging that no more executions be carried out in the Palestinian Authority and that the government work towards abolishing the death penalty.

**APPEALS TO:**

President Yasser Arafat  
Palestinian Authority

Al-Muntada

Gaza

Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: President Arafat, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**

**Faxes: + 972 7 282 2365 (when voice answers, please ask for fax tone)**

**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, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**

**Faxes: + 972 7 286 7109**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Mr Khaled al-Qidreh

Attorney General for the State Security Courts

Police Headquarters

Gaza

Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: Khaled al-Qidreh, Police Headquarters, Gaza, Palestinian Authority**

**Faxes: + 972 7 282 4253 (when voice answers, please ask for fax tone)**

**Salutation: Dear Mr al-Qidreh**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr Qadura Fares

Chairman of the Human Rights and Monitoring Committee

Palestinian Legislative Council

P O Box 1930 Ramallah

Palestinian Authority

**Salutation: Dear Mr Fares**

and to diplomatic 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 15 August 2000.