

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Mohammed Lahloh, aged 25

Muhammed Lahloh was arrested on 3 September in the town of Jenin, and is being held incommunicado there by the town's Military Prosecutor. He has reportedly been tortured. He was seen with what appeared to be cigarette burns on his hands, and bruising to his face. He was said to have had difficulty walking and to have lost a great deal of weight.

Muhammad Lahloh was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department (*al-Bahth al-Jina'i*). His wife was apparently allowed to visit him only once, for five minutes on around 16 September, with prison guards present. Her husband was apparently shaking and unable to stand properly. He has apparently now been moved to a private house, as the police detention centres in Jenin were partially or wholly destroyed by Israeli shelling last month. A lawyer from the Palestinian human rights organization *Al-Haq* tried to visit Mohammed Lahloh on 1 October but was turned away. On 2 October the lawyer applied to the Military Prosecutor for permission to visit him.

Mohammed Lahloh lives in the Palestinian Authority, but travels across the border to Israel every day, to work in a carwash in Haifa. He is reportedly being interrogated about alleged drug trafficking from Israel and "collaboration" with the Israeli authorities. He has not been charged with any offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Palestinians suspected of "collaboration" with Israel have frequently been arrested, held incommunicado and tortured by the Palestinian Authority security services. More than 300 suspected "collaborators" are now believed to be detained, without charge or trial, in the areas under the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the West Bank. Some have been held without charge or trial for more than five years. A number of those accused of "collaboration" are said to have died in circumstances which suggest they were extrajudicially executed by members of the PA security forces or killed by armed Palestinian groups.

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

- expressing concern at reports that Mohammed Lahloh is being tortured in detention, and asking the authorities to ensure that he is treated humanely in accordance with international standards;
- calling for an independent investigation into the torture allegations, with the results made public and the perpetrators brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities that while he is in custody, Mohammed Lahloh has the right of access to his lawyer and family, and expressing concern that he is being denied this right;
- urging that Mohammed Lahloh be given prompt and adequate medical care as necessary;
- urging the Palestinian Authority to release Muhammad Lahloh unless he is to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence;

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
Palestinian Authority
Al-Muntada

Gaza

Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: President Arafat, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Faxes: + 972 8 282 2366 (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, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Faxes: + 972 8 286 7109

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Zuheir Manasra

Governor

Governorate Jenin

Haifa Street

Jenin

Palestinian Authority

Faxes: +972 4 2503222

Rasmi 'Abd al-Rahman

Chief Military Prosecutor

Military Court

Gaza City

Palestinian Authority

Faxes: +972 8 286 5700

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 14 November 2001.