

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 21/17/00

24 July 2000

**Further information on UA 319/99 (MDE 21/19/99, 15 December 1999) and follow-ups (MDE 21/12/99, 20 December 1999; MDE 21/01/00, 10 January 2000) - Prisoner of Conscience/Legal Concern/Incommunicado Detention**

**PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Dr. 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem, aged 50, academic**

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Although the Palestinian High Court of Justice ordered his immediate release on 6 July 2000, Dr. 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem is still in prison.

The court order was delivered to the Chief of Police, General Ghazi al-Jabali, and the Attorney General Advocate, Zuheir Sourani.

Dr. Qassem has been imprisoned since 18 February 2000, when he was arrested at his home in Nablus. He was first held in Jericho prison, and transferred to Nablus prison during the last week of June.

Amnesty International believes his arrest was politically motivated, and considers him a prisoner of conscience, detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Dr. 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem is a professor of political science at al-Najah University, in Nablus. He was first arrested last November, together with eight other prominent Palestinians, for signing a statement criticizing the Palestinian political leadership. His files, documents and his computer were confiscated and he was later interrogated by the Attorney General of the State Security Court, Khalid al-Qidrah. He was held for nearly six weeks at the General Intelligence Centre in Jericho, and only released without charge on 6 January after he signed an undertaking to appear in court if requested, and to pay 50,000 Jordanian dinars (about US\$75,000) if he failed to do so.

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

- stating that Amnesty International considers Dr 'Abd al-Sattar Qassem to be a prisoner of conscience detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- noting that on 6 July 2000 the Palestinian High Court said his detention was unlawful and ordered his immediate release;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- asking the Palestinian Authority not to detain anyone for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- asking the Palestinian Authority to respect the rule of law and implement court orders.

**APPEALS TO:**

President Yasser Arafat  
Office of the President  
The Beach Forum  
Gaza City  
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**

General Ghazi al-Jabali

Head of the Palestinian Police  
Police Headquarters  
Gaza City  
Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: General al-Jabali, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**

**Faxes: + 972 282 2335 (when voice answers, please ask for fax tone)**

**Salutation: Dear General al-Jabali**

Advocate Zuheir Sourani  
Attorney General  
Attorney General Building  
Yarmouk, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

**Telegrams: Attorney General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza**

**Faxes: + 972 7 282 4502**

**Salutation: Dear Advocate Sourani**

**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 Organisation  
accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 September 2000.