

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 202/00 (MDE 21/15/00, 7 July 2000) - Prisoner of conscience/Legal concern/Incommunicado Detention

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

‘Abd al-Fattah Ghanem, aged 60, Presidential Advisor on Refugees

‘Abd al-Fattah Ghanem, the Presidential Advisor on Refugees, has been released. In a telephone call he thanked Amnesty International for campaigning on his behalf.

‘Abd al-Fattah Ghanem, was arrested by Palestinian police on 21 June 2000 and was initially held in incommunicado detention. Amnesty International has just learnt that he was released on 12 October 2000, with other prisoners in Ramallah Central Prison, following fears of rocket attacks after the killing of two Israeli soldiers. The Palestinian Authority has not, however, returned his identity card.

Amnesty International considers ‘Abd al-Fattah Ghanem to have been a prisoner of conscience, detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression. His arrest is believed to have been in connection with statements he made to newspapers about the failure to find a just settlement to the Palestinian refugee question and complaints of administrative corruption. More than three million Palestinians are living as refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. The fate of these refugees is one of the main issues for peace talks between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority.

No further action is required by the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.