

URGENT ACTION

FOOTBALLER'S HUNGER STRIKE CONTINUES

The health of Palestinian footballer Mahmoud al-Sarsak, on hunger strike in an Israeli prison, is deteriorating. Other administrative detainees who had also been on hunger strike have stopped following a deal with the Israeli authorities. Mahmoud al-Sarsak is continuing his hunger strike in demand for his immediate release.

On 14 May 2012, a deal reached between the detained Palestinian hunger-strikers and the Israeli authorities ended a mass hunger strike which began on 17 April. According to lawyers and local human rights organizations, the deal includes an Israeli commitment to release all administrative detainees once their current detention orders expire, providing there is no significant new intelligence information against the detainee. However, most administrative detention orders are based on information that is largely secret, and is not revealed to the detainees or their lawyers, and cannot therefore be challenged.

Mahmoud al-Sarsak's detention is set for review on 22 August 2012. Held without charge for almost three years, he is the only individual detained under Israel's Unlawful Combatant Law.

Bilal Diab, Tha'er Halahleh, Hassan Safadi, Omar Abu Shalal, and Ja'afar Izz al-Din, who continue to require urgent hospital treatment, along with other administrative detainees may be released when their detention orders expire over the next few months. Bilal Diab and Tha'er Halahleh are apparently refusing to go to Assaf HaRofeh hospital where they fear, as happened previously, that they will be shackled to their beds at all.

Please write immediately in Hebrew or your own language:

- Urge the Israeli authorities to ensure that Tha'er Halahleh, Bilal Diab, Hassan Safadi, Omar Abu Shalal, Ja'afar Izz al-Din, and Mahmoud al-Sarsak are given full and specialized medical care in a hospital able to provide such care, expressing particular concern for the health of Mahmoud al-Sarsak;
- Urge them not to submit these men and all other detainees and prisoners to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, such as shackling detainees who are or were on prolonged hunger strike;
- Welcome news that the Israeli authorities will grant detainees and prisoners from Gaza visits from their relatives and cease the practice of isolation;
- Call on the Israeli authorities to immediately release all administrative detainees, including the six men, unless they are promptly charged with internationally recognizable criminal offences and brought to trial in proceedings that meet international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JUNE 2012 TO:

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Defence

Ehud Barak
Ministry of Defence
37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia
Tel Aviv 61909, Israel
Fax: +972 3 69 16940 / 62757

Salutation: Dear Minister

Israel Prison Service Commissioner

Lieutenant-General Aharon Franco
Israel Prison Service
P.O. Box 81
Ramleh 72100, Israel
Fax: +972 8 919 3800

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General

And copies to:

Military Advocate General
Brigadier General Danny Efroni
6 David Elazar Street
Hakiryia, Tel Aviv, Israel
Fax: +972 3 569 4526

Email: avimn@idf.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Judge Advocate
General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

This is the second update of UA 119/12. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/023/2012/en>
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/025/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mahmoud al-Sarsak, who was admitted to hospital for one day on 6 May 2012 because of an infection, has been held without charge or trial since 22 July 2009 and has been on hunger strike since 24 March. A member of the Palestinian national football team from the Gaza Strip, his detention order was last renewed on 1 March 2012. He and two other sentenced prisoners reportedly remain on hunger strike.

Tha'er Halahleh and Bilal Diab were arrested on 26 June 2010 and 17 August 2011 respectively. They went on hunger-strike around 29 February 2012. On 1 May Bilal Diab was transferred from the prison clinic to Assaf HaRofeh hospital before being transferred back to the Israel Prison Service (IPS) medical facility at Ramleh prison eight days later. While in Assaf HaRofeh hospital, he was shackled to his bed at all times. On 7 May, a petition filed by both men against their administrative detention orders was rejected by the Israeli Supreme Court.

Hassan Safadi was arrested on 29 June 2011 and began his hunger-strike around 2 March 2012. On 7 May a doctor affiliated to PHR-Israel visited him and confirmed that he was forcefully injected with fluids containing salt, glucose and other minerals at the beginning of May. The doctor noted that he was in a critical condition and recommended his immediate transfer to a public hospital, but he remained at the IPS medical facility.

Omar Abu Shalal was arrested on 15 August 2011 and began his hunger-strike on 4 March 2012. Ja'afar Izz al-Din was arrested on 21 March 2012 and went on hunger strike at the end of that month. On 6 May the Military Court of Appeals rejected Ja'afar Izz al-Din's appeal against his administrative detention order. On 7 May a lawyer from the Palestinian human rights organization Addameer visited Ja'afar Izz al-Din at the IPS medical facility at Ramleh prison and the lawyer warned that he was in a dire situation.

A district court judge ruled on 7 May that Omar Abu Shalal, Ja'afar Izz al-Din and Mahmoud al-Sarsak should be permitted to see PHR-Israel doctors in the same week, on the condition that the Israel Security Agency (ISA) gave security approval for the visit and that PHR should be informed whether the visit would take place by 10 May. The visit did not take place and neither were PHR informed about it one or way or the other.

An estimated 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees went on hunger strike protesting prison conditions, isolation, denial of family visits and detention without trial. Under the Egyptian-brokered deal of 14 May, Israel agreed to end the solitary confinement of 19 prisoners – held in isolation for up to 10 years – and to lift a ban on family visits for prisoners from the Gaza Strip, among other things. Further negotiations reportedly led to an agreement that administrative detention orders of current detainees will not be renewed unless significant new intelligence information is presented. At the end of April 2012, some 308 Palestinians were held as administrative detainees according to IPS statistics. Some are held as prisoners of conscience, held solely for their peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association or assembly. Administrative detention orders are based on secret information which is not disclosed to the detainees or their lawyers, denying detainees the opportunity to effectively exercise their right to mount a legal challenge.

Names: Tha'er Halahleh, Bilal Diab, Hassan Safadi, Omar Abu Shalal, Ja'afar Izz al-Din, Mahmoud al-Sarsak

Gender: All male

Further information on UA: 119/12 MDE 15/028/2012 Issue Date: 18 May 2012