

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN MAN DENIED MEDICAL TREATMENT

The Israeli authorities are denying critically ill Palestinians access to treatment which cannot be obtained in Gaza. Ahmed Abu Mteer, who suffers from Hodgkin's lymphoma (a cancer affecting white blood cells, which is curable if treated in time), has been denied permission to travel from Gaza to a Palestinian hospital in East Jerusalem to receive life-saving treatment.

Ahmed Abu Mteer was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in August 2008. He received several courses of chemotherapy in Gaza, where only limited medical treatment is available. However, the treatment provided in Gaza has not been sufficient to **control his disease** and, in May 2009, a scan revealed a mass in the centre of his chest as well as enlarged lymph nodes. On 7 May he was urgently referred to Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem to receive life-saving treatment, including **chemotherapy**, radiation, and a stem cell transplant (whereby cells from the patient's own body, or from donors with matching cell types, replace the cells damaged or destroyed by other treatment).

Ahmed Abu Mteer was scheduled to travel from Gaza to East Jerusalem, which is part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), for a hospital appointment on 23 June, but the Israeli authorities denied him permission to **leave** Gaza for unspecified "security reasons".

Ahmed Abu Mteer sought help from the Israeli branch of the international organization Physicians for Human Rights (PHR-Israel), who consulted with Professor Dina Ben Yehuda, head of the haematological department at the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. Professor Yehuda assessed that, as Ahmed Abu Mteer had not responded to the treatment he received in Gaza (where only the first stage of treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma is available), he should urgently receive more advanced treatment, including aggressive chemotherapy, radiation, and a stem cell transplant. None of these treatments are available in Gaza but can easily be provided in hospitals in East Jerusalem, an hour's drive from Gaza.

Based on Professor Ben Yehuda's opinion, PHR-Israel applied to the Israeli Coordinator in Gaza on 30 June for permission for Ahmed Abu Mteer to travel from Gaza to the hospital in East Jerusalem. Two days later, the Israeli authorities denied the request – again, for unspecified "security reasons". Ahmed Abu Mteer remains in Gaza, unable to travel to the hospital in East Jerusalem.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- expressing grave concern that Ahmad Abu Mteer has been denied permits to access potentially life-saving treatment;
- pointing out that under international law, Israel, as the occupying power, has the responsibility to ensure that the population of Gaza and the rest of the OPT has access to adequate medical care and hospital treatment
- noting that Ahmed Abu Mteer needs urgent medical treatment which he cannot receive at home, and that delays caused by denials of his request to travel to the hospital in East Jerusalem put his life at risk.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 AUGUST 2009 TO:

Ehud Barak
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia,
Tel Aviv 61909, Israel
Fax: + 972 3 691 6940
Email: minister@mod.gov.il
Salutation: Dear Minister

Brigadier General Avihai Mandelblit
Judge Advocate General
6 David Elazar Street, Hakiryia,
Tel Aviv, Israel
Fax: + 972 3 608 0366
Email: arbel@mail.idf.il
Salutation: Dear Brigadier General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Palestinians have been trapped in Gaza since June 2007, when Israel further tightened the already stringent movement restrictions previously imposed on the inhabitants of Gaza. Since then, with few exceptions, Palestinians from Gaza have not been allowed access to the rest of the OPT, including East Jerusalem, where they could obtain medical care not available in Gaza. Medical facilities in Gaza lack the specialized staff and equipment to treat a range of conditions. Hospitals and medical facilities are also increasingly short of spare parts for medical equipment as a result of Israel's blockades on Gaza's imports.

Scores of critically ill patients have died in the past two years after being delayed or prevented from leaving the Gaza Strip by the Israeli authorities for unspecified "security reasons". Denying passage to patients in desperate need of medical care serves no legitimate security purpose, as all patients undergo strict security checks at the crossing.

Under international law, Israel, as the occupying power, is prohibited from imposing collective punishment or reprisals on the Palestinian population and must ensure that Palestinians throughout the OPT, that is in both Gaza and the West Bank, have access to adequate medical care and hospital treatment.

UA: 183/09, Index: MDE 15/022/2009, Issue Date: 08 July 2009

