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ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS
FOR AN EFFECTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS MANDATE FOR INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

Amnesty International calls on Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) -- as well as on Norway, Denmark and Italy who are expected to send observers and other personnel to al-Khalil (Hebron) shortly -- to ensure that the mandate of this international presence includes effective human rights monitoring.

Some 160 personnel, including field observers who may be armed for self-defence, office staff and support personnel, are due to form a Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) following an agreement reached in Cairo on 31 March 1993 between the five parties. Norway will contribute 90 personnel, Denmark and Italy about 35 each.

Amnesty International believes that this initiative could contribute to improve the human rights situation in al-Khalil and therefore facilitate the achievement of a lasting peace settlement. Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the international personnel envisaged will have substantial police background, because such background is essential to effectively monitor law enforcement. In order to be really effective, the human rights organization urges the relevant parties to ensure in particular the following:

1. The TIPH mandate should be clear and include explicitly the reporting on violations of specific human rights.
2. The standards to be used in the monitoring, as well as in any use of force by the TIPH, should include the United Nations (UN) Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions.
3. The reports by the TIPH should be frequent and public: the public availability of such reports in particular is crucial to secure the trust and credibility of the population towards the TIPH.
4. The TIPH should be empowered to receive complaints and take up incidents with the relevant authorities.
5. There should be adequate liaison and cooperation between the TIPH and Israeli and Palestinian human rights non-governmental organizations, as well as international organizations, which already carry out monitoring functions in the Occupied Territories.
6. The independence and impartiality of the TIPH should be ensured and its operations protected against any political interference.
7. Before the end of its mandate the TIPH should undertake and make public a comprehensive evaluation of the human rights situation observed, with recommendations for follow-up.

These recommendations are based on a comparative study of UN human rights monitoring operations within the context of peace-keeping and Amnesty International's 15-Point Program for Implementing Human Rights in International Peace-Keeping Operations (see the report, Peace-Keeping and Human Rights, AI INDEX: IOR 40/01/94, issued by Amnesty International in January 1994).

Since February 1994, Amnesty International has been calling for the introduction of effective on-site human rights monitoring throughout the Occupied Territories with a mandate to cover the actions of both Israeli and Palestinian law enforcement officials.

According to the text of the Cairo agreement of 31 March, the tasks of TIPH officials will include providing "by their presence a feeling of security to the Palestinians of Hebron", helping to "promote stability" and monitoring "the efforts to restore the safety of Palestinians and events affecting it and the return of normal life in the city of Hebron".

The TIPH will report "on specific events" to a Joint (Israeli-Palestinian) Hebron Committee and periodically to a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee, set up under the Declaration of Principles of September 1993, and an Ad Hoc Liaison Committee of the Donors including the three countries contributing personnel.

The mandate of the TIPH is for three months. With the consent of Israel and the PLO, "the TIPH may extend the period or change the scope of its operations, as agreed".

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