

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 21/04/97

25 July 1997

Further information on UA 205/97 (MDE 21/03/97, 25 July 1997) - Prisoner of Conscience/Legal Concern; new concern Incommunicado Detention

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Fathi Subuh, 43, lecturer in education

Fathi Subuh, a 43-year-old university assistant professor of education, arrested on 2 July 1997, has now spent 25 days in Tel al-Hawa Prison in Gaza without access to his family nor to his lawyers. It is not known whether or not he is still on the hunger strike he began soon after his arrest because he remains in incommunicado detention.

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in Gaza petitioned the Palestinian High Court on 12 July demanding to know why Dr Subuh had been arrested. The High Court gave the Attorney General eight days to respond to the request. To date, no response has been received.

Dr Subuh is believed to be held because of two questions he placed in the final year examination paper for the "critical thinking course" in the Department of Education, one question asking students to write about corruption in the Palestinian Authority, the other asking about corruption in al-Azhar University in Gaza. In a worrying development on Tuesday 22 July, members of the Palestinian security forces came to the Subuh house and carried away the students' examination answer papers.

FURTHER BACKGROUND

President Yasser Arafat set up a committee to investigate corruption after criticisms in the Palestinian Legislative Council and from international press and donors. The committee, which reported on 21 July, apparently recommended that some members of the PA be put on trial.

On 19 July a new Attorney-General, Fayez Abu Rahma, was appointed, who promised to release or bring to trial all political prisoners (said to number about 185) held by the Palestinian Authority. However, Dr Fathi Subuh is believed to be held on the direct orders of President Arafat.

Fathi Subuh and his wife also co-direct the Tuffah Educational Development Centre, one of the most important educational non-governmental organizations in Gaza.

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

- stating that you consider Fathi Subuh to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his alleged critical attitude towards the Palestinian Authority;
- noting that Fathi Subuh has now been illegally held for 25 days in incommunicado detention;
- requesting information as to his state of health and that he be granted immediate access to his family and lawyer and to a doctor of his choice;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
Palestinian Authority

Al-Muntada
Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Faxes: +972-7-822365 (ask to send a fax)
Telegrams: President Arafat, Palestinian Authority, Gaza
Salutation: Dear President Arafat

Minister of Justice Mr Freih Abu Meddein
Ministry of Justice
Abu Khadra Building
Omar al-Mukhtar Street
Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Faxes: +972-7-822236
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Palestinian Authority, Gaza
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES (welcoming his statements regarding the release of political prisoners)TO:

Fayez Abu Rahma
Attorney General
Palestinian Authority
Attorney General Building
Yarmouk, Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Telegrams: Attorney General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza via Israel
Faxes: +972 7 824 503
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

and to diplomatic representatives of Palestinian Authority accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 September 1997.