

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names
1999		15	Palestinian Authority	Abdulsittar Qassem, historian, a.o.
	1999			<i>follow-up 1</i>

Announcement:

The American Association for the Advancement of Science has further news on the academics and government critics arrested in areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority on 28 November 1999. Many of them were released but our colleague Dr. Abdulsittar Qassem, professor of history at An Najah University, is still detained. Please renew your appeals.

29 December 1999

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION NETWORK (AAASHRAN)

UPDATE

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY--ACADEMICS AND GOVERNMENT CRITICS ARRESTED

CASE NUMBER: PA9915

Issues

Right to liberty and security of the person; freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention; freedom of expression.

Facts of the case

Six government critics arrested by the Palestinian Authority after they signed a petition criticizing its actions and alleging corruption have been released. On 28 November 1999, the Palestinian Authority initiated a campaign to arrest and harass signatories of the petition. Academics, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and former politicians were among those who signed the petition. Of the eleven signatories whose names appear below, Ahmad Katamesh and Dr. 'Abdul Samara were never interrogated and were released without charge. Dr. Yaser Abusafiyya, Dr. Afif Sulaiman, Dr.

Abdulrahim Kittana, and Dr. Adnan Odeh were released on bail, without charge after they indicated that they would report to the State Security Court for additional interviews. They are subject to a \$75,000 fine if they fail to do so.

Two detainees, Dr. Ahmad Shaker Doobeen and Dr. Abdulsittar Qassem are being held at the General Intelligence detention center in Jericho. There is concern for their well-being and fears that the men will not receive a fair trial before the State Security Court. Mr. Doobeen's family has only been allowed to see him on one occasion.

Arrested signatories

Dr. Ismat Shakhshi, professor of chemistry at An Najah University, summoned to the Nablus police station on 28 November for questioning. Although allowed to leave on US\$12,500 bail, she had to return for questioning the next morning;

Dr. Abdulsittar Qassem, professor of history at An Najah University, arrested by Palestinian General Security Services in Nablus;

Dr. Abdul Samara, writer and editor of Kan'an from Ramallah, detained by Palestinian police, and transferred to Jericho prison on 29 November to await the General Prosecutor of the State Security Courts;

Ahmad Katamesh, writer from Ramallah, detained by Palestinian police, and transferred to Jericho prison on 29 November to await the General Prosecutor of the State Security Courts;

Ahmad Shaker Doobeen, school teacher from Hebron, arrested by Palestinian police;

Bassam Shaka'a, former mayor of Nablus, placed under house arrest;

Dr. Yaser Abusafiyya, physician from Nablus, detained by Palestinian police;

Dr. Afif Sulaiman, physician from Nablus, arrested by Palestinian police;

Dr. Abdulrahim Kittana, physician from Tulkarem, arrested by Palestinian General Security Services in Nablus;

Dr. Adnan Odeh, researcher for the Union of Parliamentary Researchers from Nablus, arrested by Palestinian police; and

Waheed Alhamdallah, former mayor of Anabta, placed under house arrest.

President Arafat requested the removal of parliamentary immunity from nine other signatories who are members of the Parliamentary Council.

Although the Council did not vote on the matter, the Palestinian officials have, at least on one occasion, taken the matter into their own hands. On 16 December, 'Abd al-Jawwad Saleh, a seventy-year-old, well-known member of the Council and former minister, was taking part in a demonstration protesting the detentions when he was invited into the detention center and reportedly brutally attacked by General

Intelligence officers.

Human rights organizations have reported that the Palestinian Authority has harassed and arrested its critics, including journalists, human rights activists, and political commentators.

The arrest and harassment of the individuals who signed the petition constitute a serious violation of international standards listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They include:

liberty and security of the person (Article 3);
freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention (Article 9); and
freedom of expression (Article 19).

Recommended action:

Please send telexes, faxes, and letters:

Calling for the immediate release of Dr. Ahmad Shaker Doobeen and Dr. Abdulsittar Qassem on the grounds that they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression;

expressing concern that they are held under the jurisdiction of the State Security Court, where trials have been reported to inconsistent with international standards for a fair trial;

requesting that Dr. Ahmad Shaker Doobeen and Dr. Abdulsittar Qassem be provided access to their families and legal counsel;

calling for the lifting of the conditions of release of Dr. Yaser Abusafiyya, Dr. Afif Sulaiman, Dr. Abdulrahim Kittana, and Dr. Adnan Odeh;

requesting a prompt, impartial, and independent investigation into the reported beating of 'Abd al Jawwad Saleh; and

calling for the perpetrators of the attack to be brought to justice.

(Source of information for this update is Amnesty International. Sources for the previous alert include the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group and the Washington Post.)

Appeal and inquiry messages should be sent to:

President Yasser Arafat

Palestinian Authority
Al-Muntada
Gaza, Palestinian Authority
Fax: 011 972 7 282 2365 (ask to send a fax)
Telegram: President Arafat, Palestinian Authority, Gaza
(Salutation: Dear President Arafat)

Advocate Zuheir Sourani
Attorney General
Palestinian Authority
Attorney General Building
Yarmouk, Gaza
Palestinian Authority
Fax: 011 972 7 282 4502
(Salutation: Dear Mr. Sourani)

Brigadier-General Tawfiq Tirawi
General Intelligence Centre
Jericho
Palestinian Authority
Fax: 011 972 2 232 1283

Copies to:

Hasan Khreisheh
Chairman of the Human Rights Committee
Palestinian Legislative Council
P.O. Box 1930 Ramallah
Palestinian Authority
Fax: 011 972 2 298 7719

Please send copies of your appeals, and any responses you may receive, or direct any questions you may have to Elisa Munoz, AAAS Science and Human Rights Program, 1200 New York Ave., NW, Washington DC 20005; tel. 202-326-6797; email EMUNOZ@AAAS.ORG; or fax 202-289-4950.

The keys to effective appeals are to be courteous and respectful, accurate and precise, impartial in approach, and as specific as possible regarding the alleged violation and the international human rights standards and instruments that apply to the situation. Reference to your scientific organization and professional affiliation is always helpful.