

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names
1999		15	Palestinian Authority	Abdulsittar Qassem, historian, a.o.
	2000			<i>follow-up 3</i>
	2000			<i>follow-up 2</i>
	1999			<i>follow-up 1</i>

*Announcement:*

Amnesty International reports that our colleague, historian and political scientist Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem (also written Abdulsittar Qassem), has been arrested again. Please renew your appeals.

[Also see NCH# 15 of 11 December 1999, 15bis of 30 December 1999, 15(iii) of 11 January 2000].

## **URGENT ACTION APPEAL**

25 February 2000

UA 50/00

Prisoner of conscience/Legal concern/Incommunicado detention

### **PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY**

**Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem, aged 50, academic**

Palestinian police arrested Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem at his home in Nablus on 18 February. He is now held in a police station in Jericho, where his lawyer and family have not been allowed to visit him. Amnesty International believes his arrest was politically motivated, and considers him a prisoner of conscience, detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem is a professor of political science at al-Najah University, in Nablus. He was arrested last November, together with eight other prominent Palestinians, for signing a statement criticizing the Palestinian political leadership (see UA 319/99, MDE 21/19/99, 15 December 1999, and follow-ups: MDE 21/21/99, 20 December 1999, and MDE 21/01/00, 10 January 2000). His files, documents and his computer were confiscated and he was later interrogated by the Attorney General of the State Security Court, Khalid al-Qidrah. He was held for nearly six weeks at the General Intelligence

Centre in Jericho, and only released without charge on 6 January after he signed an undertaking to appear in court if requested, and to pay 50,000 Jordanian dinars (about US\$75,000) if he failed to do so.

**Recommended action:**

Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters:

- stating that Amnesty International considers Dr. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qassem to be a prisoner of conscience detained for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- seeking assurances that he is being well treated;
- asking that he be granted immediate access to his family and lawyer;
- requesting details of the reason for his arrest and whether he has been charged or brought before a court in connection with a particular offence;
- asking the Palestinian Authority not to detain anyone for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

**Appeals to:**

1. President Yasser Arafat

Palestinian Authority

Office of the President

The Beach Forum

Gaza City

Palestinian Authority

Via Israel

Telegrams: President Arafat, Palestinian Authority, Gaza

Faxes: 011 972 7 282 2365 (when voice answers, please request fax tone)

Salutation: Dear President Arafat

2. Brigadier General Ghazi Jabali

Head of the Palestinian Police

Police Headquarters

Gaza City

Palestinian Authority

Via Israel

Telegrams: Brigadier General Jabali, Palestinian Authority, Gaza

Faxes: 011 972 282 2335 (when voice answers, please request fax tone)

Salutation: Dear Brigadier General Jabali

3. Advocate Zuheir Sourani

Attorney General

Palestinian Authority

Attorney General Building

Yarmouk, Gaza

Palestinian Authority

Via Israel

Telegrams: Attorney General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza

Faxes: 011 972 7 282 4502

Salutation: Dear Advocate Sourani

**Copies to:**

Hasan Khreisheh

Chairman of the Human Rights Committee

Palestinian Legislative Council

P O Box 1930 Ramallah

Palestinian Authority

Via Israel

Please send appeals immediately. Check with NCH if sending appeals after 7 April 2000.

This information is from Amnesty International's research headquarters in London, England. A.I. is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of people detained because of their beliefs, color, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used nor advocated violence. These are termed prisoners of conscience. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty, extra-judicial executions (political killings), 'disappearances' and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners without reservation. Amnesty International promotes awareness of and adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognized human rights instruments,

the values enshrined in them and the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and freedoms.