

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 15/16/96

UA 65/96 Fear of extrajudicial execution / House destruction /  
Legal Concern

6 March 1996

**ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: Concern over state response to suicide bombings**

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Amnesty International fears that the Israeli Government may authorize extrajudicial executions of suspected Islamist militants as a response to the suicide bombings which have killed over 60 people in the last two weeks. The organization is also concerned about the sealing and destruction of houses as punishment against the families of bombers, and about the authorities' use of administrative detention.

Over the last two weeks suicide bombs in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ashkelon have killed over 60 people, including 45 civilians, and wounded over 200. Two bus bombs in Jerusalem, set off during the morning rush hour, killed 45 people, including the bombers, on 25 February and 3 March 1996. A bomb set off next to a crowded shopping mall in Tel Aviv on 4 March killed 14 people, including the suicide bomber (see UA 64/96, MDE 15/15/96, 5 March).

Following a cabinet meeting on 3 March, after the second Jerusalem bombing, Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced a series of measures. One such measure was that the family homes of the bombers would be sealed and, later, destroyed. Since that announcement eight homes have reportedly been sealed. According to Israeli law, families have 24 hours to appeal to the military authorities and a further 48 hours in which to appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court against demolition orders. However, other measures ordered by the Israeli authorities include a curfew and blockades to prevent movement. At least one of the refugee camps where some of the bombers lived - al-Fawwar Camp - is barred to entry from outside so that lawyers have been unable to enter or make contact with those members of the families of the bombers still at liberty.

In an announcement made on 4 March Prime Minister Peres said that Israeli forces would "strike at, punish and damage the people responsible for this horrible terrorism, the members of *Hamas* and *Islamic Jihad*... I was asked whether we would violate the law; one law we will not violate - that is the law of national and personal security of the State of Israel." The Prime Minister announced the setting up of a special task force under the head of the General Security Services (GSS), Reserve Admiral Ami Ayalon, which would be "guided by the need to prevent, punish, and strike at all centres of *Hamas* and *Islamic Jihad* terrorism, wherever they are".

Amnesty International fears that the GSS task force may carry out extrajudicial executions of those perceived to be organizing bomb attacks or aiding bombers. The apparent extrajudicial execution on 5 January 1996 of Yahya Ayyash, said to have made suicide bombs, who was killed in Gaza by a booby-trapped mobile telephone, was cited by *Hamas* as the motive for the present attacks. The organization urges the Israeli Government, in its justifiable desire to maintain security and to bring to justice those who have killed or ordered killings, to abide by international UN human rights standards which Israel has itself ratified. Governments have a right and a duty to bring to justice those who commit crimes, but this must be done in accordance with international standards and fundamental principles of humanitarian law which prohibit extrajudicial executions.

In the same announcement Prime Minister Peres said that "it was decided to put all those related to terrorism under administrative detention" and to "deal with all villages from which the suicide terrorists have or will come". Members of the Israeli Defence Forces carried out a sweep of al-Fawwar camp and at least 50 people related to those believed to have carried out or organized suicide bomb attacks are said to have been detained. Amnesty International opposes administrative detention as the denial of the right to a fair trial.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Hebrew or your own language:**

- while recognizing the shock and grief caused by the suicide bombs which have killed over 60 people since 25 February 1996, urge the Israeli Government in all its measures to respect international human rights standards and fundamental principles of humanitarian law;
- calling on the Israeli Government not to condone or encourage extrajudicial executions. According to human rights standards such as the United Nations International Covenant on Civil or Political Rights (ICCPR) the right to life of every individual is an inherent right which cannot be derogated from in "time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation". By ratifying the ICCPR Israel has agreed to act according to its principles;
- urging the Israeli Government not to seal or destroy houses as a form of collective punishment;
- calling on the Israeli Government not to carry out indiscriminate arrests or to place people in administrative detention. Those detained should be charged with recognizable criminal offences and given fair trials or released.

**APPEALS TO:**

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**Salutation: Dear Minister**

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**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 April 1996.