



PRESS RELEASE

ISRAEL: Death in custody must be immediately investigated

Geneva, 28 February 2013. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) expresses its grave concerns about the allegations of torture and the subsequent death in custody on 23 February 2013 of Mr. Arafat Jaradat, a 30-year-old Palestinian student, who was detained in Megiddo Prison. OMCT urges the competent Israeli authorities to immediately carry out a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the circumstances of his death according to the Investigation into Circumstances of Death Law.

On 18 February 2013, the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) and General Security Service (GSS) reportedly arrested Mr. Arafat Jaradat from his home in the town of Sa'eer, near Al-Khalil (Hebron) alleging that he had thrown stones at cars from a nearby settlement. He was allegedly severely beaten by the IOF during his arrest. He was then taken to Jalameh Interrogation Centre in the northern West Bank before being transferred to Megiddo Prison.

According to his lawyer, Mr. Arafat Jaradat was tortured during his interrogation, including being forced to sit for long hours in stress positions with his hands shackled behind his back. During a court hearing on 21 February 2013, his lawyer requested that Mr. Jaradat be given a medical examination, including because he was suffering from pain in his back. However, the judge reportedly ruled to extend his detention for a further twelve days and ordered that the medical officials in the interrogation centre examine his health conditions and report the results to the GSS and the court. Mr. Jaradat reportedly died two days later, on 23 February 2013, in Megiddo Prison, under conditions that remain unclear.

Mr. Jaradat's death is the latest example of the ongoing human rights violations committed by the Israeli security forces on Palestinian detainees and prisoners. OMCT has been informed that, since 2003, there have been several hundreds complaints of torture in the Israeli Prisons, none of which have been investigated. On 21 January 2013, another Palestinian prisoner Mr. Ashraf Abu Dra died from a fatal coma shortly after his release due to a medical negligence during his detention.

"The structural impunity of the intelligence service and the persistence of any legal accountability for acts of torture and other human rights violations must end" said Gerald Staberock, Secretary General of OMCT.

OMCT supports the call of its member organisations, notably The Public Committee Against Torture (PCATI) and Addameer, to immediately open an independent and impartial investigation into the circumstances of the death of Mr. Arafat Jaradat.

"The Israeli investigative authorities must refrain from resorting to unlawful means of interrogation and must respect fundamental safeguards against torture and ill-treatment" added Gerald Staberock.

OMCT recalls to the Israeli authorities that the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment requires that each State Party shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction (Article 2 a)) and that each State Party shall keep under systematic review interrogation rules, instructions, methods and practices as well as arrangements for the custody and treatment of persons subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment in any territory under its jurisdiction, with a view to preventing any cases of torture (Article 11).

OMCT also calls on the Israeli authorities to immediately release all administrative detainees detained without charges or trial and to take immediate measures in order to ensure that the hunger-striking prisoners receive proper medical treatment in an adequate medical facility, and that they are treated humanely under all circumstances.

Contact:
Alexandra Kossin, Tel. +41 22 809 49 39