

•Mirvat Takhrouri, 20, was changing into her clothes at 6:30 a.m. when Golani soldiers broke into her house and beat her. They dragged her by her hair, hit her head against a window and broke the glass, and took her to the central market area where she was forced to remain for two hours. She was then taken to military headquarters where she was charged with attacking a soldier and forced to pay 500 NIS fine and released until her trial date.

DECEMBER 17 -- Amer Hashlamon, 17, was driving his car to work when he was shot at by Golani soldiers. He was hit in the face by shrapnel from high velocity bullets which hit the window. He was initially in critical condition with injuries to the jaw, face, neck and right hand.

•Schoolchildren shouted slogans at four military jeeps of soldiers at the entrance of their school in Jabalya, then ran away. Soldiers shot at them, injuring seven year old Munir Najjar in the right leg. He was taken to Shifa hospital, then Tel Hashomer hospital where he was operated on and remained eight days, then transferred to Maqassed where he underwent a second operation.

DECEMBER 20 -- Mahmoud Abu Zeineh, 24, of Khalil, was beaten by Golani soldiers who broke into his house for no apparent reason. The beating continued for a three hour period until the Red Cross interfered. He is in Ahli hospital where he is being treated for multiple bruises and injuries to his legs, back, spinal column, head, chest and stomach.

DECEMBER 22 -- A group of borderguards shot at Izhaq Sa'afin as he was walking down the street in Khalil. He was shot at from a distance of five meters and hit in the left leg. He fell on the ground and then was beaten by two of the borderguards with their legs and gun butts. He was taken to Alia hospital, then transferred to Maqassed. His leg was fractured and he received seven stitches to close a wound on his eye from the beatings.

DECEMBER 23 -- A 13 year old child with multiple physical and mental handicaps was beaten severely in front of his house in Shaboura quarter of Rafah. Women from the neighborhood shouted at the soldiers that the boy, Nashat Dgheim, was a deaf mute and retarded but they persisted in the beating. Women threw stones to make the soldiers stop beating the child but the soldiers began beating the women and then took the child with them. A municipality car brought him home after finding him left in a street two hours later. He was taken by ambulance to hospital and treated.

DECEMBER 30 -- A six year old boy, Mahmud Sharawneh, was walking home with his mother near Herod's Gate outside the walls of the old city of Jerusalem at the time of the peace march. Border guards threw tear gas and Mahmud was severely affected. He was taken to Maqassed hospital where he was admitted to the pediatrics section.

## PRISONS AND PRISONERS

### SPECIAL REPORT: TWO DEATHS IN GAZA CENTRAL PRISON

#### BEATING DEATH

**Khaled Sheikh Ali**, 27, of the Rimal quarter/GAZA, was arrested from his home December 7 on suspicion of being a member of the Islamic Jihad; his father, Kamel, and brother Nasser, 19, were arrested at the same time. His father was released the next day, but Khaled and Nasser were held in detention. On December 19, Khaled died in the interrogation room in Gaza Central Prison. Soldiers arrived at the family's house the next day, searched the grounds, and brought Khaled's father to the police station to identify his son.

The family, in coordination with local lawyers and the Ramallah-based human rights organization al-Haq, quickly arranged via the US-based Physicians for Human Rights for an independent forensic physician to participate in the official autopsy. Dr. Michael Baden, former Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, and currently co-director of the Forensic Sciences Unit of the New York State Police, came from New York. Dr. Baden, with Dr. Yehuda Hiss, head of the Abu Kbir Forensic Institute, performed an autopsy on Sheikh Ali on December 24. The results were clear: Sheikh Ali did not die of natural causes, but from internal bleeding caused by a blow or blows to the abdominal area. Specifically, there was tearing of the mesentery, a thin fold covering the intestines. Death would result after 15 minutes to an hour from this particular injury. Dr. Baden noted that the blow was

probably inflicted with a broad blunt instrument, such as a hand or foot. He stressed that such a blow would not predictably cause death, but would inflict much pain.

Other marks of beating were found on Sheikh Ali's body, particularly on his chest, back and legs. These injuries were not all visible externally, leading one to believe that they were purposefully done so as not leave visible evidence of beating. There were also injuries to the testes and marks on the sides of the body, possibly from fingers.

Drs. Baden and Hiss then visited the interrogation room in Gaza prison and interviewed the interrogators involved. (According to Dr. Baden, the room was an office-type room, 4 meters by 5 meters, with table, desks, chairs and word-processor.) Dr. Baden described the interview as follows:

(9.) We spoke to about five people who identified themselves as being involved in the questioning. They would not give their names saying that this would be contrary to policy. They did, however, explain exactly who did what. According to what we were told, on the evening of December 19, one person brought Khaled to the interrogation room, spoke to him, and left. Then others came in and spoke to him. When he collapsed two others were called and later a doctor and paramedic also responded and went to the room where Khaled allegedly collapsed.

(10.) The alleged interrogators said they started the questioning around 7-7:15 p.m. and that Khaled collapsed around 7:50 p.m. The doctor arrived shortly after 8:00 p.m. and tried to resuscitate him; Khaled was pronounced dead at around 8:30 p.m. It is possible to conclude that the injuries were not inflicted earlier than the admitted interrogation. 11. All the alleged interrogators claimed that they did not inflict blows; this is inconsistent with the autopsy findings... (Quoted from al-Haq press release, "Khaled Sheikh Ali - Autopsy Findings")

Several important points can be clearly deduced from the above report. Firstly, Sheikh Ali was systematically and professionally beaten while under interrogation by the Shin Bet. A number of the injuries did not leave marks and were probably meant to be invisible. Secondly, the blow that led to Khaled's death was probably not meant to kill, but to inflict great pain. The interrogators were trying to break Sheikh Ali, not be left with an unexplained corpse. It is clear, however, that the amount of force used in interrogation is potentially lethal. Thirdly, the interrogators lied to Drs. Baden and Hiss, denying the use of force. This lie was only exposed because a credited outside expert could prove that death was caused by a blow and that the blow must have been inflicted during the time period of the interrogation. This indicates the likelihood that the authorities have managed to lie more successfully in other cases of prison deaths.

Khaled Sheikh Ali's death is now under official investigation, and two Shin Bet employees have been suspended from their positions. However, the results of the autopsy demand investigation into other suspicious deaths in Israeli prisons. Particularly suspicious is the March 6, 1989 death of Mahmoud Yusef al-Masri, also in the interrogation center of Gaza Central Prison. Like Sheikh Ali, al-Masri complained of stomach pains before dying in the corridor of the prison. The official Israeli autopsy found that al-Masri died of a perforated ulcer; however, there was no investigation done to determine if blows had led to the perforation [see *April 1 Update* for more details.]

#### **ANOTHER SUSPICIOUS DEATH**

**Jamal Mohammed Abd al-Ati Abu Sharkh**, 23, of Shati RC/Gaza, died in an isolation cell in Gaza Central Prison on December 3, 1989. On October 13, Jamal had driven a car which ran over a soldier and a Shin Bet agent; the soldier lost both legs. Jamal was shot three times in the stomach, leg and shoulder. He was taken to Ramle prison hospital, where his family saw him on November 3. Jamal told his family that his interrogation was finished. He also told them that he carried out the car attack because the Shin Bet agent involved was known to him personally: he had previously refused Jamal's applications to travel to the Gulf for employment and had pressured him to collaborate. The family said he was in high spirits, and asked to see his attorney, Raji Sourani. On November 5 or 6, Advocate Sourani went to Ramle and was told Jamal was transferred to Asqalon prison, where his family visited him on November 9. Sourani went to visit on November 11, and was told Jamal had been sent to Gaza Central Prison for interrogation. An ICRC delegate saw him there on November 27, and said Jamal was fine and wanted to see Advocate Sourani. On November 26 and December 3, however, Sourani's office was told that the Shin Bet was prohibiting visits to Jamal from his lawyer. On December 4, Sourani went again to the prison; this time he was told that he personally was not

allowed to see any clients. Other lawyers who saw detainees in the interrogation section were told by their clients that Jamal "had been killed," and that there was a strike in the prison. Neither the family, the ICRC nor Sourani had been notified officially at this time.

At 12:30, Jamal's brother Bashir was called to the Civil Administration and informed that his brother had died. Bashir accused the Shin Bet of killing Jamal, and was told: "He did something the others didn't do. He deserved it." Advocate Sourani then arranged with the family to call in an outside doctor for the autopsy, and coordinated this with other attorneys and al-Haq. An autopsy was performed, with a foreign observer sponsored by the Physicians for Human Rights participating. The results, however, have not yet been made public. It is known that Jamal died from suffocation, and probably from hanging. The authorities allege that he hung himself.

### **PRISON POPULATION**

Currently there are approximately 15,000 Palestinians in detention. (This figure includes only those being held 14 days or longer.) According to PHRIC's information, 4,495 detainees are being held in facilities controlled by the General Prison Authorities; of these 2,962 are being held in prisons in the West Bank and Gaza, and 1,533 are being held inside the Green Line. Detainees in detention camps controlled by the military number 9,223, approximately 2,000 of whom are under administrative detention, leaving some 7000 in detention without trial or administrative proceedings instituted. Those held in interrogation centers number 588. The remainder are being held in police stations or holding installations attached to military centers.

### **ANSAR 3**

Detainees in Ansar 3 held two one-day hunger strikes, on December 3 and 19.

The leaders of the prison sections held a 30-minute meeting in December with the head of the prison. The representatives of the detainees put forward the following demands:

1. Extra blankets and warmer clothes; the administration promised an extra blanket for each detainee;
2. Removal of the wire-mesh grid dividing detainees and their lawyers during meetings; the administration promised to remove the grids in two months;
3. Transfer of administrative detainees whose detention had been renewed to Jneid prison; this demand was rejected;
4. Visits between sons and brothers being held in different sections; the administration promised to allow these visits and to transfer brothers to the same section;
5. Visits between prisoners in different sections; the administration stated this would be arranged with the security officer, named Kobi;
6. Singing by detainees to be permitted; this demand is being considered;
7. Access to television; the administration promised to fulfill this demand; These demands have been put forward before, and detainees attribute the hunger strike to procrastination on the part of the authorities.

During December, in section A, where 1,200 detainees are held, approximately 700 detainees suffered from throat infections, which spread quickly due to overcrowding.

### **TULKARM**

Prisoners in Tulkarm detention center held a hunger strike from December 28-31 to protest prison conditions. In letters sent from the prison, the following demands were put forward:

1. Improvement of the quantity and quality of food;
2. Equipping the prison kitchen [used by the detainees] with utensils for cooking and a washing machine;
3. Access to books and more timely distribution of newspapers;
4. An end to the provocation and harassment of detainees' families during visits;
5. Better general treatment of the detainees, including more frequent visits with their lawyers.

Detainees in the underground sections of Tulkarm detention center are suffering from deteriorating health due to the high humidity and cold during the winter months. There has recently been an outbreak of mumps and skin diseases. The only medication available is paracetamol, an aspirin substitute.