



PRESS RELEASE NO. 15 - 31 May 1988

AL-HAQ CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE CLOSURE OF KETZIOT/ANSAR 3

Al-Haq/Law in the Service of Man is calling for the immediate closure of Ketziot Military Detention Centre in the Negev desert, also known as Ansar 3. The holding of detainees from the Occupied Territories outside of those territories, and the inhumane and illegal conditions under which they are being kept, constitute clear and flagrant violations of local and international laws.

On 2 April 1988 al-Haq issued its Press Release No. 13, drawing attention to the harsh conditions in Ansar 3 and in particular to the severe lack of water. On 19 May 1988, five West Bank lawyers, including a lawyer from al-Haq, were allowed to visit the section of Ansar 3 where West Bank administrative detainees are being held. During that visit, information collected from detainees - including four of al-Haq's field-workers in detention - revealed that conditions cited in Press Release No. 13 still exist, and are in fact deteriorating as the number of detainees increase and the desert summer approaches. It is reported that Ketziot/Ansar 3 now holds over 3,000 detainees.

On 29 May 1988 al-Haq received the attached open letter from Palestinian detainees at Ketziot/Ansar 3. The letter is self-explanatory and the description of the severe conditions therein is consistent with the information we had earlier received. Al-Haq further confirmed this information in another visit to Ketziot on 30 May 1988. These conditions are so severe as to warrant extreme concern for the health and well being of the detainees at Ketziot. Article 85 of the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War clearly states the obligation of the detaining power to accomodate detainees in "buildings and quarters which afford every possible safeguard as regards hygiene and health, and provide efficient protection against the rigours of the climate..."

Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention specifically prohibits the transfer of detainees from areas under occupation to the occupier's own territory. Israel is clearly in violation of this article as well.

In addition, Israel is violating its own military regulations of 31 January 1982 pertaining to the treatment of administrative detainees, including family visits, food, clothing and necessary medical care.

Given the above serious violations, and the urgency of the situation at Ketziot/Ansar 3, al-Haq, as a human rights organisation, can only conclude that this illegal internment camp must be closed immediately.

LETTER FROM DETAINEES AT KETZIOT/ANSAR 3

(Enlargement from the original which was written on tissue paper)

والله اعلم بما في كل مكانه ، الى اصحاب الضائقة الحرة ، الى اهل المعتقلات ، الى كل المرافعة من حقوقه الانسان
منشأكم العمل على انقاذنا من معتقل الموت البطيء ، معتقل القمار "٣" ، المعتقل "١١" ، المعتقل "٣" ،
خمس الاف المعتقلين الفلسطينيين الذين رُجحت بهم السلطات الاسرائيلية في معتقل اريئيل في معتقل اريئيل
ديبره مراعاة لاسبغ الامارات القضائية الشكليه بما فيها حقنا في معرفة التهم الموجهة لنا
من طرف قاضي تحت طيب الشمس الصحراوي اللاتيني نزارا حيث ترتفع درجة الحرارة الى
٥٤ م وتختص نيلنا الى ما دره الصفر في منطقة نقتصر فيها الزواحف والحشرات
والجرذاه واذا كانت هذه هي فظا صرقتوه الطبيعة فانه قوة محاسن المعتقل
وعنفهم وحلهم الدائم للقدس والتليل لاشد قسوة ، حيث تمس هذنا
مرب تجوع وتعطش واذلال وتحطيم جسدي ونفسي ؛ فخلا بتركوه وسيلاً
اللا ويمارسوننا ليضمونا تحسبوا احد افرام التي تقارض مع كل الاغراق ولو انشون
الدولة الى جهنم منا فأتوا التامه لكل القيم الاخلاقية والانسانية ، اتنا نجبر
على تبيع الخيام من الخلاء هبنا وحسب منتصف الليل تحت طيب الشمس في اجواء مغيره
ويجاصفة فحاله بالبرهان ، كما نجبر على الجلوس على الارض لفترات تمتد لنصف ساعة ثلاث
واربع مرات يومياً تحت حرارة الشمس منهجية وقت تجدي يدادعه الجنود المصوبه حونا ،
دوره مراعاة للمرضى وكبار السن ، اما عن الماء ونزرتنا التي تقبل الى جهنم الاقطان
الذي فيه لرامتنا الوطنية والكثيبيه ، فاننا لا نلتقي للترفيه الشرب وقضاء الحاجه والحمام
لساعات طويلة يومياً ، واذا ما توفرنا فاننا لا نملك من الملابس سوى غيار واحد في ظل
النصف شديدي في هذا الحر القاتل بينما لا نملك من الملابس سوى غيار واحد في ظل
عدم السماح باستلام الملابس من الاهل ، او ليحنا ما يلزم او توفير المواد اللازم للتفصيل ،
كلامه او نمانعنا الصحه الجيده بالتصور ونفاني منه هاله جهنم عام وامراض شتى ، حيث
اه العناية الصحه تتجاهل كونه معتومه ، كل هذا ترا فقه العزله القاصه المفروضه علينا حيث
لا يسمح لزوجينا بارتنا بفصل التقديرات التي تفرضها السلطات رغم محسني وقت طويل
على اعتقالنا ورغم السماح لنا بارسال او استلام الرسائل ، الى جانب عدم السماح لنا
بالاستماع للراديو او اذلال الصحف والمجلات والكتب والدفاتر والاقلام مما يعني اننا
نحرم من اجراءات عقابه لا انسانية تتصرف كسوق يروج الانسائه فنيا ، واذا فقه محتواه
او حكامه والانساني ومن هذا الغاء حتى لتلك الحقوقه التي يجزها قانونه العميق الاداري ،
اننا نناشدكم الحقوق معنا كوضع حد للعنف والارهاب والاذلال المنظم الذي يدوقنا الموت
الطبيعي ونضالوا عمالة السلام التي يتوجه لها الانسائه في هذه الديار القدره ونظا اليكم
بتظيم وفور من الهيئات والمنظمات الانسانية لزيارة هذا المعتقل الذي يفتقر الى
كل شي ، عدا على مقومات الصحة والارهاب والقتل والهل على اغلاقه ، اننا نتوجه
اليكم جميعاً للوقوف مع الانسائه لمنع هدرها وليسمح العالم صهيونياً
المعتقلون الفلسطينيين في معتقل اريئيل "س" "النقت"

١٩٨٨ / ٥ /

Translation

TO ALL PEOPLE OF CONSCIENCE EVERYWHERE, TO DEMOCRATIC FORCES, TO ALL DEFENDERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS...We call on you to rescue us from the camp of slow death, ANSAR 3, Negev.

We, the thousands of Palestinian detainees have been thrown by the Israeli Authorities into ANSAR 3 Detention Centre, with no regard for the simplest judicial formalities, including our right to know the charges leveled against us. We are kept in difficult circumstances under the burning desert sun, where the temperature by day reaches 45 degrees centigrade and drops to below zero at night; in an area teeming with reptiles, insects and rats. But the severity of nature is no match for the cruelty of the soldiers of the detention centre, with their arbitrariness and constant brutality and violence. Against us is conducted a war of starvation and thirst and humiliation and a policy of physical and psychological destruction. They leave no method untapped to realize their aims which contradict all international conventions and agreements, not to mention the total contradiction of all moral and human values.

We are forced to keep open our tents from 5:00 in the morning until midnight, exposed to the searing heat of the sun and the dust and sand storms of the desert. We are also forced to sit on the ground for periods of up to one-half hour, three to four times a day under the scorching sun, and under the soldiers' pointed guns. No consideration is given to the sick and elderly. In addition, we are subjected to insults and curses and other humiliations to our personal and national dignity.

Water is scarce and cut off for many long hours daily. When there is water, it is hardly sufficient for drinking, toilet needs and baths twice monthly in this suffocating heat. We have only one change of clothing. We are not allowed to receive clothes nor other necessities from family, nor are we provided items for washing clothes. Our health is deteriorating and we are suffering general physical depression and various diseases. Health care is virtually non-existent. These conditions are accompanied by the total isolation imposed on us; our families are not allowed to visit due to restrictions imposed by the authorities, in spite of the length of our detention. We are not allowed to send or receive letters, nor are we allowed to have radios, newspapers, magazines, books, writing paper and pencils. This means that we are subject to punitive and inhuman measures, which aim at erasing our human spirit and denying our human and social selves. These measures cancel even those rights granted by the law of administrative detention.

We call on you to stand by us to put a stop to organized violence, terrorism and humiliation, leading us to a slow death. They are assassinating justice and the potential for peace which all human beings long for in this Holy Land.

We urge you to organize delegations of humanitarian groups and organizations to visit this detention centre which lacks everything except the elements of death, terror and murder, and that you work towards closing it. We call on you all to stand on the side of humanity, to prevent its loss. May the world hear our voice.

May 1988

PALESTINIAN DETAINEES AT THE CAMP OF SLOW DEATH, ANSAR 3, NEGEV.