

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN'S SOLITARY CONFINEMENT RENEWED

Ahmad Manasra's solitary confinement was extended until 16 March 2023. At a hearing on 24 November in the Beersheba District Court, the Israel Prison Service requested to extend the solitary confinement by six months. The judge approved a four-month extension on the basis of secret evidence. Ahmad Manasra is a Palestinian arrested in 2015 at the age of 13, who has developed serious psychiatric conditions while in prison, and who has been in solitary confinement since early November 2021. His mental health has deteriorated to the level of life-threatening risk. Prolonged solitary confinement for more than 15 days is a violation of the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

**Minister for Public Security
Ministry for Public Security**

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Dear Minister

*I am writing in grave concern for **Ahmad Manasra**, 20, a Palestinian from East Jerusalem held in Eshel Prison in southern Israel, whose mental health has deteriorated to a life-threatening degree during solitary confinement. I am concerned that if the Supreme Court decides to keep him in prison, he will suffer even more. Having served more than two thirds of his sentence, Ahmad Manasra is eligible for parole, with special regard for the health conditions he developed during his incarceration and after suffering ill-treatment during interrogations when he was 13 years old.*

On 24 October 2021, Ahmad Manasra was diagnosed by an independent Israeli clinical psychologist with serious psychiatric conditions. Ten days after that diagnosis, the Israel Prison Service placed him in solitary confinement, which continues until today. Psychiatrists have said that his incarceration, and especially his solitary confinement, puts his health in acute danger. Nevertheless, the Israel Prison Service extended his solitary confinement twice, most recently on 24 November. In June, October, and November 2022, the prison doctor rushed Ahmad Manasra to the prison hospital following life-threatening deterioration in his mental health. After discharge from hospital he was sent straight back to solitary confinement.

I call on you to ensure the release of Ahmad Manasra so that he can access health and social services in his community. Israel, a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), has obligations to ensure that the deprivation of liberty of children is “used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time”. Also, according to CRC General Comment No. 24 (2019) Israel should provide “regular opportunities to permit early release from custody [...] into the care of parents or other appropriate adults.” Pending his release, Ahmad Manasra should immediately be removed from solitary confinement and given healthcare in compliance with medical ethics, including confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent. I urge you to arrange thorough, prompt, impartial and effective investigations into Ahmad Manasra’s alleged torture and other ill-treatment.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmad Manasra is held in Eshel Prison near Beersheba, in southern Israel.

Ahmad Manasra was 13 years old when he was arrested in 2015 in relation to the stabbing and injury of two people in Pisgat Zeev, an Israeli settlement in East Jerusalem. At the time, Israel's Youth Law did not allow imprisonment under the age of 14, and the court proceedings were delayed until he had reached 14 years of age. A month after Ahmad Manasra's arrest in November 2015, footage of his interrogation was made public. The 10-minute video, reviewed by Amnesty International, shows him with a bandaged head from an injury at the time of his arrest, being interrogated by three men, without the presence of his lawyer or parent, in violation of international standards. He appears increasingly distressed as his interrogators continue to shout at him, directing insults and threats. This video is evidence of several violations of Ahmad Manasra's rights as a child and as a detainee. To Amnesty International's knowledge, there have been no investigations into the conduct of police and security officers. Despite being found by the courts not to have participated in the stabbings, he was convicted of attempted murder in 2016 and sentenced to 12 years in prison, which the Supreme Court reduced to nine and a half years in August 2017.

Ahmad Manasra suffers from serious mental health conditions. On 24 October 2021, he was diagnosed by an independent Israeli clinical psychologist with serious psychiatric conditions – schizophrenia, psychosis, and severe depression – that he developed since his detention. Approximately ten days after that diagnosis, the Israel Prison Service placed him in solitary confinement, which continues until today. Psychiatrists said that his incarceration, and especially his solitary confinement since early November 2021, continues to put his health in acute danger. Nevertheless, on 17 April 2022, the Israel Prison Service renewed his solitary confinement for a further six months, until 16 October 2022, and requested another extension after that date. On 13 June 2022, the prison doctor rushed Ahmad Manasra to the prison hospital following life-threatening deterioration in his mental health. He was discharged from prison hospital on 19 July 2022 and put straight back in solitary confinement. Repeated risks to his life occurred in October and in November 2022, requiring hospitalizations. Any solitary confinement for more than 15 days is a violation of the absolute prohibition on torture.

Ahmad Manasra has now served more than seven years of his 9-and-a-half-year sentence, which qualifies him to be considered for release on parole according to Israeli law. Court hearings in summer 2022 rejected his appeals to be removed from solitary confinement and to be eligible for release on parole. On 1 September 2022, the District Court in Beersheba heard Ahmad Manasra's another appeal for early release, on the grounds of medical necessity. This appeal too was rejected. The Supreme Court is the court of final appeal.

The treatment of Ahmad Manasra fits a wider pattern of discrimination against Palestinian children in the criminal justice system. According to Amnesty International's records, some 170 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel as of June 2022 were arrested when they were children, and twelve children are currently held as administrative detainees. In many of the cases, children were denied fair trials in line with international standards and furthermore were discriminated against on racial grounds as Palestinians. Evidence collected by Amnesty International, and by human rights organizations B'Tselem, HaMoked and Defence for Children International – Palestine (DCIP), shows Israeli authorities implement the law in a discriminatory manner by denying Palestinian children in East Jerusalem basic rights to a fair trial and to be protected from torture and other ill-treatment. This denial of fair trial rights to Palestinian children and their associated ill-treatment contributes to and forms part of the cruel system of oppression and domination, legally amounting to apartheid, perpetrated by Israel against all Palestinians. A report released by DCIP in April 2016 found three out of four Palestinian children endured some form of physical violence following arrest, and 97 per cent of children had no parent present during interrogation, or access to legal counsel.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Hebrew. You can also write in English or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 23 January 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ahmad Manasra (he/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/6000/2022/en/>