

During the sitting on the **23.11.2000**, the cases of 16 prisoners were scheduled, of which three decided not to appear. The board issued early releases to four prisoners, which the prosecution had not objected to. In all four cases only a few days or up to two weeks remained of the sentences. Attorney Tamar Pelleg advocated on behalf of an additional four prisoners who were eligible for early releases. For example, the case of a young prisoner, born in 1980, who was convicted on two indictments. An Intelligence officer in the prison had clearly and unambiguously stated in a recommendation that the boy had become a member of the Hammas movement in 1990 at the age of ten. Part of his activities included listening to religious lessons by Amar Amatte the 'suicide bomber' who died in a 1993 attack in Hadera, and his association (the practical implications of which are unknown) with the movement continued until his arrest. On the **18.12.2000** a further 20 cases were discussed by the board and three prisoners were released with the agreement of both sides. An additional criminal prisoner, who had traded in arms and drugs, was released despite the objection of the prosecution and a representative from the Investigating Branch of the Military Police.

#### Complaint of a gas attack on inmates at the Megido prison.

On the 14.5.2000, inmates in the Megido prison carried out a peaceful demonstration in support of Palestinian prisoners detained in institutions under the control of the Prison Authority who had initiated a hunger strike. Subsequently the prison administration announced an additional inspection as a form of punishment against the inmates' earlier actions. After the prisoners refused, soldiers began detonating hundreds of tear gas canisters and stun grenades in their living quarters. The grenades ignited a fire resulting in a number of injuries and the burning of five of the prison tents. A number of the injured prisoners failed to receive prompt or adequate medical treatment. Attorney Tamar Pelleg took testimonies from prisoners who witnessed the event and submitted a detailed complaint to the Chief Prosecutor of the IDF. In response, the IDF prosecutor who handled the complaint, sufficed with a clarification with the prison authorities and refused to order the opening of an investigation by the Investigating Branch of the Military Police.

#### Family Prison Visits

Since the redeployment of the IDF in the Occupied Territories, all Palestinian security prisoners are transferred to prisons within Israel. As a result all family prison visits are dependent on the IDF's granting of permission to enter Israel. Even after permission is granted the family members are not allowed to move around Israel freely, rather they arrive and leave the prison via organized transportation provided by the Red Cross and escorted by IDF soldiers. There are two types of permits: periodic permits, which allow visits on all organized transportation for a period of three months, and single one-day permits. The issuing of these permits is restricted to first-degree family members only, while no more than five family members can be in the possession of a travel permit at any one time. Furthermore, many family members themselves are prevented from entering Israel due to their own 'security profiles'. HaMoked continues to advocate on behalf of many parents, wives, brothers, sisters and children who are prevented from seeing their loved ones for prolonged periods of time, sometimes even for years.

During the year 2000, HaMoked achieved a breakthrough in this area. A collective pre-Supreme Court petition was submitted by HaMoked to the State Attorney's Office on

behalf of 12 parents and wives who were prevented from visiting their family members in jail. As a result of the petition a new directive was issued stipulating that every parent, wife or sister of a detainee who was prevented from visiting family members would now receive standard single visit permits without having to go through IDF security investigations prior to each visit.

N.R. is an example of someone who benefited from the new agreement. Her husband, a resident of one of the villages in the Ramallah district, has been held in Israeli prisons since 1982 serving a 99-year sentence. Since November 1997 a prevention order had been issued against N.R. making it impossible for her to visit her husband. At the end of March this year she was due to undergo surgery involving the removal of her ovaries under general anesthetic. Besides the dangers of unforeseen complications, the surgery would also mark the end of her fertility. At the time she had not seen her husband for two years and desperately wanted to visit him. HaMoked issued an urgent request, based on humanitarian grounds, to the State Attorney, requesting permission for her to visit her husband before the operation. The request was made on the agreement that an Arabic-speaking representative of the prison services would be present to insure that no objects would be passed between the couple.

The new arrangement, following the collective petition filed by HaMoked, allowed N.R. to visit her husband on a regular basis by means of the single-day permits – visits that were made possible without the justification of an imminent operation or other form of emergency.

Following the outbreak of the Al Aqsa Intifada however both the new agreement and all regulations pertaining to family prison visits were cancelled. At the time of writing, for over two months, residents of the Occupied Territories had been prevented from visiting their loved ones held in Israeli prisons. Contacts between the Red Cross and the Israeli authorities and requests submitted by HaMoked had all failed to bring any results.

#### Gazan Residents Under GSS Investigations in the Ashkelon Prison

One of the consequences of the current Intifada has been the large wave of arrests by the authorities. Attorney Tamar Pelleg represented a number of detainees from Gaza who had been placed under GSS interrogations in the Shikma prison in Ashkelon. Examples of these cases include the following:

Na'hed Fugo is a taxi driver who found himself caught up the middle of an IDF planned operation initiated in order to kill two Fatah members in the Gaza Strip on the 22.11.2000. The two Fatah members, plus two other people who were incidentally traveling in the vehicle, were killed. Na'hed who was miraculously saved, was arrested and brought to the Ashkelon prison. At the time nobody was aware of his fate. He was interrogated by the GSS and was placed in a cell together with collaborators. On the 26.11.2000 a human rights organization in Gaza requested assistance from Attorney Pelleg in locating him. Attorney Pelleg located him at the Ashkelon prison, where she visited him the following day, took an affidavit and prepared a request for a judicial reevaluation in connection to his arrest. This was submitted to the court the following morning. Na'hed was released from prison on the day of the meeting before the request even reached the secretary of the court.