

Major Projects

In addition to the Hotline's ongoing assistance to Palestinians on a walk-in basis, several issues were especially prominent in 1992.

Family Reunification

Due to the harsh regulations concerning legal residency in the West Bank, many spouses (usually wives) and children of Palestinians are not considered legal residents. Instead they are only allowed to "visit" their husband and father through short term visitor's permits issued by the Civil Administration. When these permits expire, visitors are required to exit the territories before requesting an additional permit.

In 1990 the Association for Civil Rights in Israel reached an agreement with the State's Attorney whereby first degree relatives of Palestinians who entered the territories before June 5, 1990 were entitled to long term visitor's permits, renewable without exiting the territories. In 1992 the Hotline succeeded in extending this agreement to August 31, 1992, thereby allowing thousands of families to remain together without fear of expulsion.

The Hotline's success was the result of its aggressive legal advocacy - including 56 appeals to the Israeli High Court on behalf of over 350 Palestinians - as well as its cooperation with a broad spectrum of Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations. The organizations involved include the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, al-Haq, B'tselem, PHRIC (the Palestinian Human Rights Information Center), the Women's Human Rights Project, the Israel Section of Defense of Children International, and the Quakers. This campaign was the first in the level of cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations.

While the 56 appeals were successfully resolved, the campaign is unfinished. Spouses entering the territories after the deadline, and recently married couples are not covered by this agreement. Furthermore, Civil Administration officials continue to harass families who apply for their extended permits. The Hotline, supported by the coalition, continues to file High Court appeals on behalf of families not covered by the August 31, 1992 agreement. It will continue its advocacy on behalf of residency issues to ensure that all Palestinians are granted the rights to conduct a normal family life without fear of separation.

Deportations

The evening of December 16, the Israeli military began the deportation of 415 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Hotline actively protested the deportation and was one of several human rights advocates to file an appeal to the High Court and receive an interim injunction temporarily preventing the deportation. In a special sitting of seven Justices, the High Court imposed a show cause order requiring the state to justify its actions within 30 days. Yet a majority of five Justices lifted the interim injunction. Thus the deportation was completed immediately following the High Court decision.

In the following weeks the Hotline participated in several additional High Court appeals regarding the deportations. These appeals concerned the notification of families, the welfare of the deportees and their right to appeal.

On January 28, 1993 the High Court ruled on the legality of the deportation. The ruling states that the deportation order, which does not allow an appeal before deportation, is illegal and cannot be used in the future. Yet the High Court did not require the state to return the deportees.

Organizational Structure

The Hotline began the year with two full-time coordinators, a part-time secretary and a part-time attorney. Over the course of the year, the Hotline expanded its office staff to process the increased caseload. It hired an additional full-time administrative assistant to correspond with the relevant authorities regarding existing cases. In addition the Hotline added a part-time fund raiser. Thus the Hotline now has five staff members.

Due to the shortage of lawyers willing to work in the field of human rights, the Hotline has been unable to replace its staff attorney who left in June. Thus, the outreach attorney is now working in the Jerusalem office. The Hotline relied on consulting attorneys to advocate on behalf of specific cases, including family reunification and the recent deportations. In 1993 the Hotline will initiate several measures to train an attorney, including an internship program and mentoring by a private attorney. The Hotline will also continue to use consulting attorneys, as this enables it to benefit from the knowledge of experienced human rights advocates.

Name Change

Beginning in 1993 the Hotline will use its Hebrew name, HaMoked, in all correspondence, whether it be in Hebrew, English or Arabic. This will alleviate the confusion generated by three different names in the three different languages, as well as contribute to HaMoked's name recognition.