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Date: July 2, 2014

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To
Attorney Osnat Mandel
Head of HCJ Division
State Attorney's Office
Ministry of Justice
29 Salah al-Din St.
Jerusalem

By fax: 02-6467011

Dear Madam,

Re: Pre-petition regarding Cessation of family visits to Palestinian prisoners held inside Israel

Ref.: our letter to the Military Legal Advisor for the West Bank, dated June 25, 2014, with a copy to the Attorney General and to the COGAT

1. I hereby appeal to you on the subject in reference, as follows.
2. As we detailed in our letter in reference, sent to the above listed officials, one of the measures taken by the Israeli authorities – the Military Commander in the West Bank and the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories – following the abduction of the youths and the subsequent resolutions of the government and the security cabinet, was **a complete halt of family visits to Palestinian inmates held in Israel**. Since Sunday, June 15, 2014, thousands of prisoners and detainees have been completely cut off from their relatives in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



4 Abu Obeidah St.
Jerusalem 97200
Tel. +972.2.6283555
Fax. +972.2.6276317

شارع أبو عبيده ٤
القدس ٩٧٢٠٠
هاتف. ٠٢. ٦٢٨٣٥٥٥
فاكس. ٠٢. ٦٢٧٦٣١٧

mail@hamoked.org.il
www.hamoked.org.il

3. From the State Attorney's Office notifications in the petitions on family prison visits to which we are party, it turns out that the visit ban is unlimited in time, and that, as it now appears, a date has not been set for their renewal. The same was told to the Palestinian residents themselves, when they applied to the offices close to their homes of the International Committee of the Red Cross (the ICRC is entrusted with coordinating that residents obtain permits to enter Israel for the purpose of prison visits).
4. A brief halt of visits in the height of intensive operational activity might have been understandable. But the longer the total ban on visits lasts, the greater the concern that does not concern just an operational or security need.
5. Such a harsh measure, denying Palestinian inmates all contact with the outside world, should be given serious consideration. In any event, it should not be used disproportionately. Clearly, the longer time passes the greater is the severity of the harm to the basic rights of the prisoners and their relatives, thereby, rendering this measure illegal.
6. This is a draconian measure employed by the Israeli authorities, which directly affects the ability of Palestinian families and their incarcerated loved-ones to fulfill their right to family life; it may therefore be concluded that the continuation of the visit ban amounts to collective punishment, imposed on a large population of helpless Palestinian residents and inmates.
7. In light of the above, I hereby request you intervene in said issue, and act to bring about the end of the ban on family visits to inmates from the West Bank and Gaza. We would also appreciate updates on the resumption of family visits or any other step you intend to take.
8. Awaiting your prompt reply.

Sincerely,
Daniel Shenhar, Adv.

Copies:

Adv. Yehuda Weinstein, Attorney General, Ministry of Justice, by fax: 02-6467001

Major General Yoav Mordechai, Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, by fax: 03-6976306/5177

Colonel Doron Ben Barak, Military Legal Advisor for the West Bank, by fax: 02-9977326