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E-003929/2013

Answer given by High Representative/Vice President Ashton  
on behalf of the Commission  
(31.5.2013)

The EU has repeatedly drawn the attention of the Israeli authorities to its concerns regarding Palestinian detainees, notably with regard to hunger-strikers and to administrative detainees.

On 16 February, the HR/VP called for the immediate restoration of family visiting rights and the full respect of international human rights obligations towards all Palestinian detainees and prisoners. The HR/VP further recalled the importance of full adherence by all sides to the 14 May 2012 agreement on the rights of Palestinian prisoners.

The EU has longstanding concerns over Israel's use of administrative detention orders. Under international law, detainees have the right to be informed about the reasons underlying any detention, and the decision on detention itself must be subject to a meaningful review process. The EU calls on Israel to bring formal charges against any individuals detained, with a view to bringing them to a fair trial without undue delay. The EU regularly raises the issue of Palestinian prisoners with Israel at all levels, including at the level of the Association Council. The question is regularly discussed in the human rights working group under the existing Association Agreement and EU concerns are reflected in its annual progress reports.

Israel disputes the claim that Arafat Jaradat died after being tortured. The HR/VP supports the call by the United Nations for an independent and transparent investigation into the circumstances of Mr Jaradat's death, the results of which should be made public as soon as possible.