

Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner
Commissioner for External Relations
and European Neighbourhood Policy
European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
Bruxelles 1049

10 January 2006

Dear Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner

Re: Detention of Hussam Khader

I am writing to bring to your attention the plight of Mr Hussam Khader, a Palestinian Parliamentarian who has been sentenced to 7 years imprisonment by an Israeli Military Court, having already spent over two and a half years on trial.

Mr Khader's Lawyers, together with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) who have been monitoring the trial, have raised a number of serious concerns about violations of international standards that would guarantee Mr Khader a fair trial, including the following:

- Charges against Mr Khader were changed three times.
- The IPU have expressed "deep concern that the prosecution case essentially rests on the statement of one person, who himself does not appear to be a credible witness" (this witness himself claimed not only that he was tortured and made his statement under duress, but also that he had been asked to incriminate Mr Khader in the event of the latter being detained).
- Mr Khader was not informed of the charges against him before being brought before a judge, and he and his lawyer have been repeatedly denied access to evidence classified as "secret".
- Mr Khader "disappeared" a number of times during his detention, and neither his family nor his lawyers were informed of his whereabouts.
- Mr Khader states that he was a victim of torture and bad treatment during his detention and interrogation.
- At Mr Khader's trial hearing, Israeli Intelligence officers admitted that evidence had been fabricated.
- Mr Khader's trial took place in the Military Court in Israel, where all of the trial judges were serving Israeli Army Officers. Military Courts are often criticised for lacking transparency and not adhering to internationally accepted legal procedures, as well as being unlikely to be impartial.
- Mr Khader himself believes that he is the victim of an attempt to silence him, because of his political beliefs and his involvement in issues concerning the rights of refugees.

In the light of these concerns, I would ask that you urge the Israeli Government to release Mr Khader, and to reform the unjust and much criticised Military Court system.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP