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**B'Tselem** – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

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## **Detention and Interrogation of Salem and Hanan 'Ali, Husband and Wife, Residents of Bani Na'im Village**

***Case Study No. 6 June 1995***

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## Introduction

Salem and Hanan 'Ali<sup>1</sup>, residents of Bani Na'im village, Hebron District, are the parents of a 28 month-old infant and a baby of seven months. Salem Ali, who is 31, was arrested on 29 January 1995 for the first time in his life. He was taken, three days later, to the Interrogation Wing of the General Security Service (GSS) at the Kishon Detention Center. For a period of six weeks, he was interrogated there and at the GSS's Interrogation Wings in Jenin Prison and the Petach-Tikva Detention Center.

A week following his arrest, on 6 February, his wife, Hanan, was detained and taken to the Interrogation Wing at the Kishon Detention Center, where Salem was being held.

At her family's request, B'Tselem contacted MK Naomi Hazan for assistance. She attempted to obtain Hanan's release, but was unsuccessful. That same day the Civil Administration notified the head of the Bani Na'im Village Council that Hanan had been arrested for 11 days for questioning, the customary period of detention for interrogation by the GSS for persons who are suspected of having committed particularly serious crimes. Such detainees are known, in security service jargon, as "HTA (Hostile Terrorist Activity) detainees". According to the military orders, such detainees do not have to be brought before a judge during this period, and an order forbidding a meeting with an attorney is routinely issued. Hanan's case was handled in such a manner.

The GSS interrogated Hanan six consecutive days continuously for at least eight hours each day. Throughout this entire period, she was not permitted to shower or change clothes. The interrogators cursed and threatened her, and photographed her, all with the intention of getting her to confess about the alleged acts of her husband.

At no time during the interrogation did the interrogators contend that Hanan had violated any law. She was released after one week, on 13 February 1995; no indictment was filed, and no legal proceedings were initiated against her.

The interrogators showed Salem pictures of his wife, taken during her detention and interrogation, clearly depicting her depressed emotional state. In addition, they advised Salem that his wife, a devout Muslim, would be placed in a cell with prostitutes and male drug-addicts. They continuously used her detention as a means to pressure Salem.

On the day of her release, the two were brought together. The interrogators forbade Hanan to tell her husband that she was being released, and told Salem that her detention had been extended by 30 days.

The other measures used during Salem's interrogation are typical techniques of torture and ill-treatment<sup>2</sup> GSS interrogators continue to use routinely also since October of

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<sup>1</sup> The actual names are on file at B'Tselem, and are not given here in full at the couple's request.

<sup>2</sup> See the following B'Tselem publications: Violence against Minors in Police Detention (Information Sheet, 1990); The Interrogation of Palestinians during the Intifada: Ill-Treatment, "Moderate Physical Pressure" or Torture? (March, 1991); The Interrogation of Palestinians during the Intifada: Follow-up Report (March, 1992); The Death of Mustafa Barakat in the Interrogation Wing of the Tulkarm Prison

1994, when they were given a freer hand in conducting interrogations. These means, cited in his testimony, included, among others:

- violent shaking of his body, sometimes while knocking his body against the wall;
- blows and kicks to his entire body by GSS interrogators and collaborators;
- sleep deprivation for extended periods of up to two weeks and more;
- being tied each night to a chair (in one instance, to a small chair) for weeks at a time;
- exposure to intense cold, generated by an air-conditioner, and to loud music;
- deprivation of medical supervision and treatment for five days although he was ill;
- being forced to kneel on his toes until exhaustion
- being held in poor sanitary conditions.

Like his wife, Salem was not indicted or tried for any criminal offense. When the GSS completed its interrogation, an administrative detention order for six months was issued against him. He was released on 29 May 1995, after the period of his detention had been reduced on appeal.

Abuse of Palestinians not even suspected of criminal offenses has been used in the past by security forces in the Occupied Territories as a means to pressure members of their family. In Hanan's case, and in an additional case documented by B'Tselem, the authorities detained and interrogated wives of suspects. In addition to the serious violations of human rights which took place during the interrogations, these acts caused severe emotional suffering both to the suspects and their families.

The report will present, with very few deletions, the full testimonies of Salem 'Ali and his wife, Hanan.

### **Background: Punishment of Suspects' Families**

The use of pressure, intimidation, and punishment against suspects' innocent family members is not a new policy of the security authorities in the Occupied Territories. These measures are used although no attempt is made to prove any allegation or suspicion against the family members; their sole purpose is to pressure the suspects.

These measures include, among others:

- demolition or sealing, without prior judicial proceedings, of hundreds of homes in which suspects lived;
- frequent night raids on homes of the families of "wanted persons", including extensive searches, which result in considerable damage to their property;
- confiscation of identity cards of fathers, mothers, and other family members of "wanted persons", and demands that they appear at the Civil Administration offices daily at a particular time.

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(Case Study, 1992); The "New Procedure" in GSS Interrogation: The Case of 'Abd A-Nasser 'Ubeid (Case Study, 1993); Torture during Interrogations: Testimony of Palestinian Detainees, Testimony of Interrogators (Information Sheet, 1994).

## Testimonies

### 1. Testimony of Hanan 'Ali

**Taken by Yuval Ginbar at Bani Na'im village on 20 February 1995**

**Aged 23, housewife, graduate of Hebron University**

I was arrested on Monday, three weeks ago [6 February 1995], about 11:30 a.m. Male and female soldiers, and men dressed in civilian clothes, came to take me. They acted all right on the whole, but they did not let me pick up my children to calm them. Nidal was still breastfeeding when they arrested me. He was given a bottle while I was in detention, and now he does not breastfeed any more.

#### Detention of Breastfeeding Mothers

Police orders, which apply to detention in Israel, set forth the rules relating to detention of a woman who is breastfeeding. These rules are intended to protect the woman's right to continue to be with the infant, and the infant's right to be cared for by his mother.

Paragraph 3(A)(5) of Order No. 12.03.01 stipulates that "a woman who is caring for an infant will not be admitted to a detention center except upon an order of court, and will not be placed in detention until the infant is examined by a pediatrician."

Paragraph 5(G)(3) of Order No. 12.03.02 stipulates that "In no event shall the mother and infant be separated."

Since Hanan 'Ali was detained inside Israel, the authorities who held her in detention without her infant also violated provisions of Israeli law.

They took me to the military government building in Bethlehem. They did not handcuff me or cover my eyes. I stayed there for at least eight hours, and they questioned me all that time. They asked about my husband - what he did, whom he met. "Abu Sharif" interrogated me. He said that if I told him certain things about my husband, he would release me immediately. He asked me nothing about what I had done. I did not know any particular information about my husband. I only knew that he went to work, and came home from work.

They told me that my husband had already confessed, and they even showed me two papers with my husband's name at the bottom, but did not let me read them. They only said: "You see, your husband confessed. Why don't you also confess?"

I told them at the beginning that I would give them any specific information that they want, and if I do not have what they want, then they should take me back to my children.

At night, they transferred me to the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. They did not cover my eyes, but they tied my hands. When we reached the Russian Compound, they placed a sack over my head, and placed me in the cell, where they took off the

sack. The cell was small, and there was a mattress, a blanket, and a hole for a toilet. Everything was terribly filthy and smelly. I stayed there for about half-an-hour. They came back, hooded me, and took me to "Abu Sharif."

"Abu Sharif" said: "You saw how much that place stinks? If you don't want to stay there, you better talk to us." Afterwards, he said: "I'll take you 250 kilometers from here so that you won't have to think about your children. There you can see them only in these negatives", and he showed me negatives of pictures that they confiscated from our house.

After an hour or an hour-and-a-half, they returned me to the cell, and I went to sleep. It smelled terribly. They brought food at night, and that was terrible too. But I was so broken mentally, I couldn't eat anything. I couldn't even drink.

I stayed in the cell the entire second day [7 February], until 7 or 8 at night. Then they took me to the Kishon Detention Center. Shortly after I arrived there, they started to interrogate me. Once again, it was "Abu Sharif". He said: "I told you I would take you far away, and if you don't give us what we want, we'll extend the detention for another month and then another month and then another month." The interrogation lasted more than an hour.

Then they placed me in a cell. During the week I spent there, they kept me in two cells. One was larger than the cell at the Russian Compound. The other one was small, with a steel bed frame which made it impossible to sit on it with the legs hanging over the sides. It was only possible to lie down or to stand near the toilet. Each of the cells was incredibly smelly and filthy.

They did not let me shower or change clothes the entire week I was there. Only on the last day, the day I was released, did they let me shower, but they did not give me clean clothes. I only ate a little, I was so depressed.

Hanan 'Ali was arrested when she was breastfeeding her child daily, which forced her to stop breastfeeding abruptly. The sudden cessation of breastfeeding necessitates specific sanitary conditions which the mother must strictly follow. A medical opinion supplied to B'Tselem indicates that

Cessation of breastfeeding after seven months causes milk leakage, and sometimes a slight blockage. It is necessary, of course, to ensure fundamental sanitary care, such as washing the area, maintaining the cleanliness of the nipples, and changing bras.

Dr. Ilan Gal  
Specialist in Gynecology

They interrogated me at least eight hours straight each day. There was a total of six or seven interrogators. In addition to "Abu Sharif", I recall that they called each other "Abu Ishaq", "Elias", and "Abu Amir."

The interrogation was non-stop. Two or three interrogators questioned me, and they took turns. I did not eat or drink during the day, of course, because of the Ramadan.

I knew that my husband was also there. They showed me pictures of him being interrogated. He looked weak and tired. They said to me: "Here is a picture of your husband, so that you can remember him."

They asked me all the time: Does this one or that one know your husband? Do these persons come to your house? But most of the questions dealt with telephone calls my husband had with people abroad. They never tried to accuse me of anything.

They didn't speak nicely to me at all. Each time I cried because of my children, they would say: "Those are phony tears, you're only acting." And they said: "You care about your children, and we care about ours, and the Hamas is killing them." I told them: "What did I do to your children - I killed somebody?"

Several times I was surprised when some of the interrogators walked behind me, making all kinds of threatening gestures, and then someone took a picture. I am sure they showed these pictures to my husband in order to frighten him.

They threatened they would tie me to the chair. Every once in a while, they suddenly got up and raised their voice, cursing. They said: "You will have your third child in jail!"

They also cursed me. (Hanan 'Ali refused to repeat the curses, but agreed to write them down: "bitch", "whore", "cunt." Y.G.)

I have no idea with whom my husband spoke. I did not know the names they mentioned. But I was in a terrible mental state. I wanted to go home to my children. They promised me that if I signed what they wanted, they would release me, so I signed a confession. The confession dealt entirely with my husband's phone calls. I admitted as if he spoke with persons whose names the interrogators gave me, although I knew no such thing.

They released me on Monday [13 February] in the evening. They treated me more humanely the last day, and let me take a shower. They said they had nothing against me, only against my husband. That same night, they let me visit with my husband. But they told me they had shown my husband a document indicating that my detention had been extended for a month, and they forbade me to tell him that I was being released. They said that if I tell him, I would not be released. I already had the release paper, but I was afraid, and I did not tell him.

They took me to an office, and my husband sat behind a desk, tied to a chair. He appeared physically and mentally broken. He started to cry when he saw me. I also cried. It was very difficult.

Since being freed, I have been afraid to sleep at home, so I sleep at relatives with my children. The thing I want most is that my husband know that I am at home.

**2. Testimony of Salem 'Ali**  
**Taken by Yuval Ginbar at Bani Na'im village on 5 June 1995**

**Aged 31, owner of carpentry shop**

I was at home when they arrested me, on 29 January 1995, about 11 o'clock at night. The soldiers came with GSS agents. They were not violent. They detained me at the military government building in Hebron for two days. On the third day [1 February], about 8:00 a.m., they took me to Jalameh [Kishon Detention Center]. The trip lasted until 9:30 p.m. They covered my head with a sack, but I understood from what they said and from the road we traveled that we stopped in Bethlehem, Ramallah, Far'ah, Nablus and Jenin. They didn't give me anything to eat or drink, and what's worse, they didn't let me go to the bathroom. Each time we stopped, I asked them if I could use the toilet, and they responded: "Its forbidden. Do it in your pants." I thought I was going to burst.

When I arrived, I had red marks on my wrists, and my hands were swollen. We deposited our personal possessions, they let me use the toilet and then took me straight to an interrogations' room. They did not take me to a doctor or medic when I arrived.

The room was regular, an office, about 3x3.5 meters. Six interrogators were inside. The person-in-charge was "Abu Sharif". I think he is in charge of both Jalameh and Petach-Tikva. "Yaron", head of the Interrogation Wing at Jalameh was also there, as were "Abu Musa", "Amir", "Elias", and "Abu Ishaq". I sat down as I normally would, in the chair, unchained. They gave me a cup of tea and treated me nicely.

The first interrogation lasted until about 11:30 p.m. Each one asked me something. They said: "We know you've been a member of Hamas since March of 1988, and that you were a stone-thrower, but that doesn't interest us. What does interest us is that you are in contact with the Hamas Command in Hebron and whether you took part in military activities." They showed me pictures of persons whom I had never laid eyes on, and asked me about them. They told me that Hamas members used my phone to call abroad. I told them that I didn't do anything. They showed me, and asked me questions about, pictures of two "shahids" [fallen victims of the Intifada] that they took from my house.

After the interrogation, they took me to another room, sat me down on a regular chair, which was tied to the floor, and tied my hands behind my back and to the chair. They opened the jacket I was wearing and turned the air-conditioning directly at me. They played loud music all the time. In addition, every 15-20 minutes, a policeman entered the cell and made sure I wasn't sleeping. I was extremely cold. When they arrested me, I was already sick with the flu.

During interrogations, they brought me food right into the interrogations room. They released one of my hands, and the policeman brought a table and sat facing me. They gave me as much time as I wanted, but sometimes they continued to interrogate me while I ate.



The next day, at about 8:00 a.m., they started to interrogate me in the same room, and it continued until 11:00 at night, non-stop. There were 2 or 3 interrogators with me at all times, and they would change and be replaced by others from time to time.

"Abu Sharif" was there at that time [2 February]. I told him I was sick, and that I had a headache. I wanted him to bring me pills that I deposited when I arrived at Jalameh. He said: "That's forbidden." I said: "Then I want to see a doctor." He said: "Here's a medication for you." He lit two cigarettes. He placed one right in front of my nose, and each time I moved my head, he moved the cigarette. He smoked the second cigarette, and each time he exhaled the smoke right into my face. I don't smoke. That day he finished a package-and-a-half of "Time" [cigarettes] in that way. Throughout the period I was interrogated at Jalameh, "Abu Sharif" did that to me with two cigarettes.

Two or three times that day the interrogator released me from the chair, stood me up, grabbed me by the jacket with both hands and shook me hard, while his fists hit me in the chest. That lasted about 5 minutes each time. It was like that every day. Sometimes more often, when the interrogators would change, at which time the new interrogator would shake me. "Abu Sharif", "Elias", "Yaron", and "Amir" used this method. "Abu Ishaq" and "Abu Musa" did not shake me.

They wanted me to confess to having connections with the Hamas leadership in Hebron, and that I initiate contact between them and persons abroad.

It was the same at night. They tied me to the chair, turned on the air-conditioner, and played the music.

On the third day [of the interrogation, 3 February], they started to interrogate me at the same time, 8:00 a.m. Yaron started to pluck hairs from my beard. He would grab a hair with his fingers and pluck it. That hurt a lot. That same day "Abu Sharif" singed my beard with his cigarettes. He made sure it didn't burn the skin. Elias came in the evening. I asked him if I could shave. He agreed, and took me to shave. When he asked me, afterwards, why, I told him that those two interrogators would do away with my beard in any event.

It appears that the security forces have recently been given permission to intensify the use of pressure on family members. The current situation was described by a *Yedioth Aharonot* reporter:

... In the circle closer to the wanted persons, IDF forces, together with the GSS, are using harassment and pressure on their families. From time to time, also on rainy, cold nights, `night visits' were made to homes of wanted persons. Close and distant relatives are frequently ordered to come to the military administration offices for talks. The adult relatives are often imprisoned. Family members of wanted persons are not granted permits to work in Israel or authorizations to travel abroad. These acts do not lead to the capture of wanted persons, but they serve to limit the circle of persons who help them. Most importantly, the wanted persons are forced to go into even deeper hiding, and to find new accomplices, outside their families.

Ronni Shaked, "The Chase after `Engineer 2'",

Another thing they did was to make me kneel over on my toes, in a crouching position, until I no longer had any strength and would fall. They would then grab me and shake me. At times they tied my legs, stood me with my back to the wall, and pushed me against the wall. Not my head, mostly my shoulders.

They used all these techniques several times each day, and each interrogator, when he entered the room, repeated the process.

Only on the fifth night did they take me to the doctor. He gave me one Acamol [aspirin] tablet. The first time they let me shower was on Friday [6 February]. They said: "You stink. Go take a shower."

On the third day, they started to say to me: "If you don't confess, we'll bring your wife. I did not know if they were serious. On the fifth day, they said: "We are arresting her today."

On the sixth day, they took me into a collaborator's room [Palestinian working for the GSS in prison] for two hours. He asked questions, but he wasn't violent.

Throughout that period, until 15 February, the schedule was the same: interrogations from 8, 8:30 in the morning until 9, 10, or 11 at night, and at night they tied me to a chair, turned on the air conditioner and music, and the policeman checked to make sure I didn't sleep.

On the seventh day [7 February], at 8:00 p.m., they sat me down facing three guards. I was chained, but not to the chair. They showed me pictures of my wife in a small cell. She was crying.

I banged my head against the wall until I started to bleed. I yelled at them: "Criminals, murderers, Pharaohs."

After that, they would show me pictures of her each day, pictures from the tiny cell, from the interrogation, sometimes with three interrogators around her. They told me: "Now we are putting her in with the prostitutes, now we are putting her with the drug-addicts."

One evening after several days, I saw my wife. She came into the room, where I was sitting tied-up. She cried all the time, and couldn't speak at all. She was tired, depressed, broken. I cried, too.

They showed me a paper indicating that she was being detained for another 30 days, until 12 March. Only on 1 March did the interrogators tell me that she had been released on the day that we had met.

On 12 March, they took me to Jenin, and they extended my detention by 21 days. I did not see my attorney that day. I didn't see him at all during the interrogation period. After 16 days, they placed me in a cell with collaborators for three days. There I could sleep.

On 18 February, they brought me to Jenin. They placed me in a small cell, which is about 1.5x1.7 meters. There were two mattresses on the floor. All day long I would bang on the door and scream: "Where is my wife? What happened to her?" They didn't answer.

On my fourth day in Jenin, they took me into a cell of collaborators. At first, I didn't know whether or not they were collaborators. There were 16 beds in the cell. They asked me where I was from, what I belong to, which organization, that is, and they asked about my "struggle chronicles" [that is, operations performed, time spent in detention and prison, and the like]. I told them I don't belong to any organization, and that I don't have any struggle chronicles. When I realized that they are collaborators, I took an upper bed in the corner and stayed by myself.

On the third night, they started to pressure me. They said: "You don't answer, you are a collaborator, the GSS sent you. They grabbed me and started to beat me. On the shoulders, kicks all over the body - the testicles, too. I was sick and weak, and felt terrible. But they were careful, too, like the interrogators, not to leave any marks.

The next day, they covered my head with a sack, tied my hands and transferred me to the GSS wing in Jenin. They took me into the interrogations' room and began to ask me about Musa from the Hamas. I said that I didn't know him. They brought papers and said: "Here is the confession you made at the collaborators." I told them I didn't confess to anything. They brought one of the collaborators, and he said: "You aren't willing to admit what you confessed when you were with us?" I said: "I didn't confess to anything."

They showed me a video tape of my conversations in the collaborators' cell. The video had lots of conversations, but it did not include the part with the beatings. I said: "First the interrogation, then collaborators, and this is all you have?"

The interrogators, of whom I remember "Amir" from Jalameh, tied my feet and began to beat me. They banged my face against the door, pushed me, and when I fell, they kicked me in the stomach and chest, and one of them put his foot on my head and pushed. They stood me up alongside the door, and everybody who passed beat me.

But they didn't do anything to me because they were short-tempered, not even the shaking, or any of the other methods. Everything appeared planned, and they took care not to leave any marks.

This interrogation and the beatings lasted until about 4:00 p.m. Then they tied me to a small chair, placed a sack on my head, and left me there until the next morning. When they came back in the morning, the sack was wet from sweat. I felt really ill, and the blows they gave me still hurt.

On 24 February, "Abu Musa" and "Amir" interrogated me in the morning until 10 or 11 o'clock, and then a representative of the Red Cross came to visit me. He saw signs of blood and swelling on my hands. He didn't see any other signs. I asked him about my wife, but he did not know what happened to her. He said he would file a

complaint, but I don't know if he did. Then they took me back and interrogated me until 8:00 p.m. Then they returned me to Jalameh.

At Jalameh, the interrogation continued in the same manner, and at night they tied me to the chair. They kept me there until 3 March, and then they took me to the interrogations' wing of the detention center in Petach-Tikva. They placed me in a small cell, about 1.5x2 meters, foul and smelly from feces, cigarette butts, and what-not. The walls were also rancid. During the day, they interrogated me for an hour or two, sometimes three, and then returned me to the cell. The same interrogators who were at Jalameh were involved: "Abu Sharif", "Abu Ishaq", "Abu Musa". They used the same techniques: shakings, forcing me to kneel, and lots of psychological pressure. They told me: "Your kids are really miserable now." It went on for five days. Then "Abu Sharif" came to the cell and said: "How is it here?" I said: "Just the way you see it." He said: "We'll move you to a better cell." They moved me to a cleaner one, but it was narrow: about 90cmx2.2m.

If you want to go to the toilet, you bang on the door, and about an hour, hour-and-a-half later, a policeman comes and takes you.

Three days later, they moved me to a larger cell. On the last day, they told me that they are giving me administrative detention for one year. They transferred me to Dahariya, and two days later to Far'ah, and there they gave me an order for six months [administrative detention]. I was there a week, and on 27 March, I was moved to the Negev [Ketziot].

I was released on 29 May 1995 following an appeal.

## Conclusion

Freedom is a fundamental right of all persons. It must not be taken away except where there is a solid suspicion that a person committed a crime, and it is certainly prohibited to arrest or punish a person in order to pressure another individual. Such action is in clear violation of the general principle that each person is legally responsible for his or her own acts, and that a person may not be blamed for the acts of another.

In the case of Salem and Hanan 'Ali, the GSS unjustifiably arrested a mother, and separated her from her children, among them a breastfeeding infant, for a week. The detention and interrogation were accompanied by severe psychological ill-treatment, including prevention of washing, continual and exhausting interrogations, gross verbal threats and humiliation, some of them of a sexual nature, and the cynical use of the longing of a mother for her children. All of this was done in the attempt to convict her husband.

The measures used against Salem 'Ali included, in addition to psychological ill-treatment through the detention and interrogation of his wife, numerous types of humiliation, emotional pressure, and physical torture. At the end of his interrogation, he was not brought to trial, but rather was sent to administrative detention.

The interrogators of Salem 'Ali beat him, and shook him with great force. Recently, such shaking led to the death of a Palestinian detainee, 'Abd A-Samad Harizat. Harizat died on 25 April 1995 after being interrogated in Hebron Prison by the GSS. The pathologists who conducted the post mortem determined that shakings by the interrogators were the direct cause of his death.

B'Tselem repeats its calls for the Knesset and the government to put an end, once-and-for-all, to the serious violations of human rights committed during interrogations of Palestinian detainees. First and foremost, they must terminate the use of physical and psychological torture. Towards this end, Israel must adopt the principles and take the necessary practical steps, as follows:

- the Knesset must incorporate the U.N. Convention against Torture, 1984, into Israel's domestic law, and establish efficient tools of parliamentary and public supervision of its implementation;
- the activity of the GSS must also be fixed in law, and its agents must be prohibited from using any measures that violate the Convention against Torture. The rules permitting the GSS to use techniques of humiliation, pressure, and violence, permitted under the recommendations of the Landau Commission, must be rescinded. Strict supervision of interrogations must be ensured, and supervision by human rights organizations must also be allowed;
- the military orders enabling holding a detainee for a lengthy period without being required to bring him before a judge, attorney, or family members must be rescinded.

**Response of the Prime Minister's Office**

B'Tselem forwarded this report to the office of the Prime Minister, who is responsible for the GSS. By telephone, we received the following response:

***Interim Response to B'Tselem***

Since complaints of interrogees are involved, the report has been forwarded to the State Attorney's Office's Department for the Investigation of Complaints by Interrogees of investigation. We must wait for the results and findings of the investigation.