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After 18 years in prison, Mordechai Vanunu was finally released

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After 18 years in prison, including 11 in solitary confinement under inhuman conditions, Mordecai Vanunu was finally released on 21 April 2004. Back in 1986 he had committed the "crime" of confirming the fact that Israel had nuclear weapons, by showing a British newspaper photos proving their existence. The Israeli arsenal was already then a false and farcical secret, and the photos in question were of no technical interest, according to specialists. The existence of this Israeli arsenal, however, represents a spur to proliferation in the Middle East - a region where tension is constant - and a danger to world peace. So do also the arsenals of the other nuclear powers, both official and undeclared.

The Israeli government is continuing its punitive treatment of Mordecai Vanunu, a hero of peace and disarmament whom they insist on calling a traitor and a spy. Under the fallacious pretext that he might make new revelations - which he could not do after 18 years detention - his release is accompanied by draconian conditions: a one-year ban on leaving Israel and travelling abroad; a ban on approaching an airport, port, or embassy; a ban on meeting journalists; a ban on using a cell-phone; a ban on communicating by internet... Vanunu, who has been adopted by an American couple, has asked to be stripped of his Israeli nationality, which the government refuses to do, so as to watch him more constantly.

These absurd measures do not do credit to Israel. Along with Amnesty International, and with all the NGOs in the "Abolition 2000" network which calls for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, we denounce them as contrary to Human Rights and to the elementary principles of democracy.

We have invited Mordecai Vanunu to attend the Rally for International Disarmament - Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (RID-NBC) which will be held at Saintes (France) on 29-31 October. We maintain this invitation.

We hope that Mordecai Vanunu will not have to spend long doing this "double sentence", and that the State of Israel, understanding where its true interests lie, will grant him full liberty.

Saintes (France), April 21, 2004

Action of Citizens for Nuclear Disarmament