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Dear Minister Hamad,

I am writing to you in relation to sisters **Wissam and Fatimah al-Tawil**, residents of the Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. They have not been heard from since 6 January 2023, after the Palestinian security services forced them back into the custody of their abusive father.

Amnesty International was able to confirm, after reviewing documents, pictures and videos, and after speaking to the two sisters and to different people who know the family, that Wissam and Fatimah al-Tawil were facing different forms of severe violence at their home at the hands of their father for months. The violence included repeated and prolonged captivity, on one occasion for 36 days, in a locked room, interrogation, beatings, death threats, threats of further violence and constant intimidation. In September 2022, the sisters fled their home by jumping from a 6th floor window. Since September 2022, when they fled to the shelter for women and girls facing domestic violence, the two women's father used his Facebook page and his circle of supporters in Rafah refugee camp to threaten the two sisters, to demand that the police return them by force, and to smear and tarnish their reputation. On 30 August 2022, the two sisters filed a complaint with the police detailing the violence that they were enduring, and that was forcing them to seek protection. The authorities, including the director of the government-run women's shelter, prevented them from meeting the prosecutor and proceeding with their complaint.

Your government had previously given assurances that the women would be protected. The Palestinian authorities are obligated to try to prevent acts of gender-based violence, especially when they are aware of specific risks, as in this case.

I call on you to seek proof that Wissam and Fatimah al-Tawil are alive and safe. The Palestinian authorities have the duty to protect the sisters from all forms of violence, guarantee their safety and security, and respect their right to choose their residence. All legal proceedings, protective and support measures and services concerning victims and survivors should respect and strengthen the women's autonomy. Accountability mechanisms should be activated to bring abusers to justice while victims of violence have effective access to comprehensive services. The security forces which detained Wissam and Fatimah al-Tawil and delivered them to their father should be investigated for their failure to protect these women.

Yours sincerely,