

Vanunu Receives Three-Month Jail Term

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, May 14, 2010
[Press TV](#) 13 May 2010

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Military and Security](#), [WMD](#)

Israel's top court has sentenced nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu to three months in jail.

Vanunu was imprisoned in 1986 after revealing Israel's military activities at the Dimona nuclear plant.

Although Vanunu has already spent 18 years in prison, an Israeli judge has ruled that he must once again return to jail or do community service for violating the terms of his release by meeting with a foreigner.

Vanunu has refused to do community service in west Jerusalem for fear of being "harassed by the Israeli population" in the west of the city.

"The plaintiff refused and the court had no choice but to sentence him to three months in jail, which he will serve starting May 23," the court said in a ruling issued on Tuesday.

Vanunu had asked the court if he could perform the community service in east Jerusalem, where mainly Arabs live, but the court rejected his request.

Human Rights group Amnesty International has urged Israel not to send Vanunu back to jail.

"If Mordechai Vanunu is imprisoned again, Amnesty International will declare him to be a prisoner of conscience and call for his immediate and unconditional release," Amnesty International Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa Philip Luther said in a statement.

"The ongoing restrictions placed on Mordechai Vanunu have meant that he has been unable to move to the USA to live with his adopted family, placing a huge strain on his mental and physical health," he added.

"They are not parole restrictions since he served his full 18-year term. They arbitrarily limit his rights to freedom of movement, expression, and association (and) are therefore in breach of international law," he noted.

Since his 2004 release, Vanunu has been detained several times. The whistleblower, hailed as a hero worldwide, spent 11 years in solitary confinement.

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