

irac seek leeway for Arafat

3
3
tv
Ho

wever, en any ssation s oper- . "It is o avoid esult in rafat's l. licted nmanuel k were d been ointed ons, as ch, the about at the eeting ekend eli del- nister rridor, erna- rror Iraq, meri- ue of ward o the e sec- duals insti- tate, Secu- White ifica- ment that and tion ainst orce sim- rele- l de- tion afat e in- yel- then urce e ad- e on it is- n or- cre- ries n." U.S. off- ne a- the lled



PLO East Jerusalem official Sari Nusseibeh (left) and an unidentified aide leaving a Jerusalem police station yesterday.

Baubau

Nusseibeh held for 'political activity' in J'lem

By Baruch Kra and Gideon Alon

Ha'aretz, Correspondents and Reuters

Id al-Fitr holiday, the PLO official said.

Attorney Jawad Boulous, one of the men detained by the police, added that the reception was a traditional affair that Nusseibeh's predecessor, Faisal Hussein, had hosted for years.

On Sunday night, however, Public Security Minister Uzi Landau issued an order forbidding the reception, on the grounds that it was being sponsored by the PLO. The order was approved by the cabinet in a telephone poll and delivered to the hotel two hours before the reception was due to take place.

As the guests began arriving, police detained six Palestinians for questioning, accusing them of defying the order and trying to hold the event outside the hotel instead. Nusseibeh protested that he had merely been trying to apologize

to the guests, who were unaware of the cancellation, and to explain to them what had happened. He told reporters that his detention had been "an oversensitive reaction on the part of the people who carried it out."

"It's too bad that instead of sending representatives with holiday greetings, the government chose to use an iron fist," Nusseibeh added; while Boulous noted that the police's heavy-handed way of enforcing the order had been even worse than the directive itself.

But Landau defended his decision, saying that the reception had been organized by the PA and, as such, was forbidden by law.

According to the Oslo Accords, the PA is not permitted to conduct political activity in East Jerusalem. This prohibition was later anchored in Israeli law, but remained almost

completely unenforced until a few months ago. Boulous admitted that the event had been organized by the PLO, but denied that the PA had been involved.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon defended Landau's decision at a Likud faction meeting yesterday. "This government has made a clear decision not to let the PA operate any longer in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, as if it were under its control," he said.

But left-wing politicians sharply criticized the decision. Opposition leader MK Yossi Sarid (Meretz), who met Nusseibeh after he was released, called the incident "the height of stupidity," while Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told reporters at the Knesset that "it was a mistake to have acted as [the police] did." Nusseibeh, Peres said, should be treated

Continued on page 12

A thori Arafat ceas were fire hour there ing in about Th killed ing a Israel. Fu and t Liber issue yeste fire p "It can't Hami ings ' serve the P. brigatinue long a Isr the P avoid again they s restri Strip, rorist. Me source had ta said, h refrain Id al groun would nize th Bu ficers counte is dift again: rael's the tig they s Palest PA sec ing bet A J Mohar killed