

PUBLIC

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To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / Middle East Regional Program
Date: 9 October 1998

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Suleiman Hassan Ramadan
Israel / South Lebanon**

Theme: detention without charge or trial / ill-health / access to medical care

Summary

Suleiman Hassan Ramadan, an imprisoned member of the Lebanese National Resistance Movement from Ba'albek in South Lebanon, has been held without charge by the South Lebanon Army in Khiam detention centre in South Lebanon since September 1985. He is reported to have been detained in incommunicado detention for three years and to have been beaten and tortured by electric shocks. Suleiman Ramadan was wounded at the time of his arrest in 1985 and had part of his left leg amputated after he developed gangrene.

Amnesty International has now received reports that Suleiman Ramadan is in poor health and might be denied access to adequate medical care. AI is seeking more information on his current state of health as well as urging his immediate release unless he is charged with a recognizable criminal offence and brought to trial in accordance with international standards.

Background information

Since the late 1970s the Israeli Defence Forces [IDF] and the South Lebanon Army [SLA], a Lebanese militia armed and supported by Israel, have controlled an area of south Lebanon. Since 1984, after the death of its founder, Saad Haddad, the SLA has been led by Antoine Lahad.

Since 1985, Khiam Detention Centre has succeeded Ansar detention camp in southern Lebanon as the main interrogation and detention centre of the SLA in south Lebanon. Almost immediately afterwards, Amnesty International began to receive reports of systematic patterns of torture in Khiam, including the use of electric shocks and beatings with electric cables, often after detainees were soaked with water. Detainees testified to the direct involvement in interrogation and torture of Israeli personnel at least until 1988.

Amnesty International believes that most of those held in Khiam without charge or trial or beyond the expiry of their sentences are held as hostages, to be used as a bargaining counter with Islamist militia groups. Israel and the SLA have more than once stated, particularly since 1991, that the release of the detainees held in Khiam is conditional on the release of, or accounting for, Israeli soldiers and SLA members missing in action in Lebanon. In June 1998, forty Khiam detainees were released after the Lebanese Militias *Amal* and *Hizbullah* returned the body of an Israeli soldier killed in South Lebanon in September 1997.

Detainees in Khiam have at no time been permitted access to independent lawyers or medical attention. Between 1987 and 1995 and again between September 1997 and July 1998 they were not even allowed access to their families or the ICRC. Detainees were denied the right of prompt judicial review of the lawfulness of their detention. Eleven detainees have died in Khiam since 1985, some of them after torture, others because of lack of medical treatment.

Recommended Actions

Appeals are requested from health professionals to the addresses below:

- C stating that Suleiman Hassan Ramadan has been held without trial in Khiam Detention Centre since September 1985 and that he therefore should be released immediately unless charged with a recognizable criminal offence and brought to trial in accordance international standards
- C stating that Israel, as the occupying power, is responsible for ensuring that those arrested within the area of South Lebanon that it occupies are well treated and receive adequate medical attention
- C expressing concern at reports that Suleiman Hassan Ramadan's health has recently deteriorated
- C seeking further information on his current state of health and asking for details of whatever medical treatment he is receiving

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 20 November, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

ADDRESSES

Benyamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street, Hakirya,
Jerusalem 91007, Israel
Faxes: + 972 3 691 7915
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

General Yitzhak Mordechai
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
7'A' Street, Hakiryā
Tel Aviv, Israel
Faxes: +972 3 697 6218
Salutation: Dear Minister

General Antoine Lahad, South Lebanon Army
c/o Lieutenant-General Shaul Mufaz
Chief of General Staff
7 'A' Street, Hakiryā, Tel Aviv, Israel
Faxes: + 972 3 691 6940 (write c/o Lieutenant-General Shaul Mufaz, Chief of General Staff)
Salutation: Dear General

COPIES TO:

Physicians for Human Rights - Israel
P.O. Box 592 Tel Aviv
61004 Israel
Faxes: +972 3 566 2527
Email: phr@netvision.net.il

and to diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.
