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Lebanon: Amnesty International calls on all involved in the conflict in South Lebanon to respect international human rights and humanitarian law
"13-POINT PROGRAM OF ACTION"

In the context of Israel's proclaimed intention to withdraw by July 2000 from the Israeli-occupied zone of south Lebanon Amnesty International today called on all governments and armed groups in the region to commit themselves to a 13-point program of respect for international human rights and humanitarian law.

The organization is today writing to the governments of Lebanon, Syria and Israel, to Israel's proxy militia the South Lebanon Army (SLA), and to Hizbullah and Amal, two armed groups operating in the region. Amnesty International underlined the fact that humanitarian law was equally binding on armed groups and states during armed conflict and both states and armed groups should respect human rights.

The legal standards which should be respected include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, the UN Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Protocols additional to them.

Within the terms of its mandate, Amnesty International called upon all governments and armed groups to commit themselves to respecting the following 13 recommendations. It also called on the governments to use their authority to ensure that the following commitments are adhered to by armed groups operating under their direction, consent or acquiescence.

I. No party should launch direct attacks on civilians or civilian objects or indiscriminate attacks under any circumstances, whether or not in reprisal; all parties to the conflict in south Lebanon should use their authority to prevent such attacks.

II. No one should carry out extra-judicial executions or other unlawful killings, including killing of those hors de combat because they are wounded, have surrendered or been made prisoner.

III. No one should torture any person under any circumstances.

IV. No one should participate in enforced or involuntary "disappearances" or abductions and all cases of "disappearance" should immediately be fully investigated; all governments, Lebanese, Israeli and Syrian, should investigate the fate of all those who "disappeared" or went missing during the conflict and ensure that adequate resources are given to these investigations; armed groups and former members of armed groups should fully assist in clarifying the fate of the "disappeared".

V. No one should be held as a hostage. Persons held outside any legal framework, including all individuals detained in Khiam Detention Centre, should be released. In accordance with Article 77 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Lebanese nationals held in Israel who have been charged with criminal offences or convicted by the Israeli courts should be released and

allowed to return to Lebanon when Israel withdraws from south Lebanon.

VI. No one should transfer detainees across national boundaries under any circumstances not permitted by international humanitarian law. To give effect to this principle, the Israeli Government should make a commitment that it will not detain within Israel detainees at present detained in Khiam Detention Centre or any other people arrested within Lebanon.

VII. There should be no house destruction as punishment.

VIII. No national of any country should be forcibly deported from that country.

IX. No one should be brought to trial in connection with the conflict except for recognizably criminal charges in trials which fully conform to international fair trial standards.

X. Israel and Lebanon should bring to justice any of their nationals suspected of being responsible for grave human rights violations or war crimes in trials which conform to international fair trial standards. Victims of human rights violations should be compensated.

XI. The death penalty should not be imposed in any circumstances or for any crimes.

XII. No asylum seeker should be refouled to a country where he or she might suffer grave violations of human rights, such as torture, detention as a prisoner of conscience, "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution.

XIII. Amnesty International further recommends that any extension of UNIFIL's mandate should include a human rights monitoring unit; in addition UNIFIL should be given the resources to ensure that this mandate is carried out effectively.

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