

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

## News Flash

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## **Lebanon: Political trial by Military Court must meet international human rights standards**

Amnesty International is concerned that four men accused of "terrorism" may not be given a fair trial before the Military Court, whose procedures fall short of international standards. Their trial is scheduled to begin today. Amnesty International fears that their "confessions" may have been extracted under duress.

Khalid Omar Minawi, Mohamed Ramez Sultan, Ihab Daf'a and Abdullah Mohamad al-Muhtadi face charges including "forming with others a nucleus of a cell of a multi-national network belonging to *al-Qa'ida* organization" and "carrying out terrorist acts".

"These four men should be tried according to international standards for fair trial. "Confessions" extracted under torture should not be admissible," Amnesty International said.

Khalid Omar Minawi, a Lebanese national, Mohamed Ramez Sultan, of dual Lebanese and Australian nationality and Ihab Daf'a, a Saudi Arabian national were arrested on 27 September. The three men were held in *incommunicado* detention for five days at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre before charges were brought against them. Abdullah Mohamad al-Muhtadi, a Lebanese national, was indicted on the same charges on 10 December after having been extradited from Togo.

While in *incommunicado* detention Khaled Omar Minawi was reported to have been tortured by a method known as the *Ballanco*. This involves the wrists being handcuffed behind the back, a rope being tied to the handcuffs and passed over a beam, so that it can be pulled and the detainee lifted off the ground. Reportedly he was also severely beaten in the stomach and face, in addition to being deprived of food for up to five days.

Amnesty International calls on the Lebanese authorities to uphold their obligations under the Convention against Torture, to which Lebanon is a state party, to ensure that these and any other torture allegations will be investigated promptly, impartially and independently.

"No evidence obtained under torture should be admitted by the court. We reiterate our call for a critical review of the jurisdiction, proceedings and conduct of the Military Court in line with international standards for fair trial which Lebanon is obliged to uphold as state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," Amnesty International concluded.

Eighteen other men of various nationalities were charged *in absentia* with having worked with the four arrested men in Lebanon and abroad.

**Background**

In the past, Amnesty International has repeatedly voiced its concern about the procedures of the Military Court which it considers to be deeply flawed, falling seriously short of international standards for fair trial. The proceedings are often summary and the rights of defence are severely limited.

Public Document

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