

UA 108/01

Torture / Incommunicado detention / Medical concern

3 May 2001

LEBANON

Jawwad Muhammad 'Alyan [m], aged 37  
Ahmad Muhammad 'Alyan [m], aged 32, his brother  
Huyam 'Ali 'Alyan [f], aged 29, their niece

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Jawwad Muhammad 'Alyan is being held incommunicado at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre in al-Yarze in the capital, Beirut, where he is thought to be at risk of torture or ill-treatment. His brother and niece, who are also being held in custody, were reportedly tortured and ill-treated recently and suffer ill-health as a result.

Military Intelligence officers arrested Jawwad Muhammad 'Alyan in the city of Tyre in southern Lebanon on 19 April. He has been accused of "collaboration" with Israel, an offence which is punishable with lengthy prison sentences or the death penalty, and it is feared that he may be forced to confess under torture. He had previously been summoned to a Military Intelligence unit around 8 April. On that occasion, he was interrogated and released without charge but ordered to report back later.

Jawwad Muhammad 'Alyan's arrest appears to be related to the arrests of his brother, Ahmad Muhammad 'Alyan, and their niece, Huyam 'Ali 'Alyan, who are also held on suspicion of having collaborated with Israel.

Ahmad Muhammad 'Alyan was arrested in the town of Dahr al-Bayyadhah in south Lebanon during the first week of March. For three weeks, he was held incommunicado at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre in al-Yarze, where he was apparently tortured and ill-treated and forced to sign an incriminating statement, which he was not allowed to read. He was reportedly handcuffed, blindfolded and subjected to the *German Chair* (a metal chair with moving parts, which stretches the spine and causes severe pressure on the victim's neck and legs) and *Ballanco* (hanging by the wrists, which are tied behind the back). He has since been moved to Rumieh Prison, where he is currently held.

Huyam 'Ali 'Alyan was arrested in Dahr al-Bayyadhah during the third week of March. It is unclear where she was held initially, but she is currently detained at the Barbar al-Khazin barracks. She has reportedly been handcuffed, blindfolded and beaten.

Both Ahmad and Huyam 'Alyan suffer ill-health as a result of their treatment. Medical reports indicate that they have been victims of violence: Huyam Alyan reportedly has bruises on her arms and wrists, consistent with the use of violence. Ahmad 'Alyan suffers from back-pain and has marks on his wrists resulting from the prolonged application of handcuffs.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Lebanon, political and criminal detainees are frequently tortured or ill-treated. This especially appears to be the case at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre, where certain categories of detainees are subjected to torture as punishment or as a means of extracting confessions. The fact that political detainees are held incommunicado, sometimes for weeks, also increases the risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Former detainees at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre have stated that they were routinely tortured during interrogation. Methods of torture include electric shock, food and sleep deprivation, *Ballanco* (hanging by the wrists, which are tied behind the back), and threats and verbal abuse.

In 1994 Fawzi al-Rasi died in custody, reportedly as a result of torture. He had been held at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre in connection with his involvement with the unauthorised Lebanese Forces party. The Lebanese authorities have failed to investigate past allegations of torture, and to

bring perpetrators to justice. Confessions extracted under duress have often been used as the main evidence in trials of political detainees.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English , Arabic , French or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Jawwad Muhammad 'Alyan, who is held in incommunicado detention, and urging that he is not tortured or ill-treated;
- expressing concern that Ahmad Muhammad 'Alyan and Huyam 'Ali 'Alyan have reportedly been tortured or ill-treated;
- seeking assurances that the three detainees will be humanely treated, and urging that they be allowed continuing and unrestricted access to their families, lawyers and any medical care they may require;
- calling for an independent investigation into the torture allegations, with the results made public and the perpetrators brought to justice;
- expressing concern that the detainees may have been coerced to confess to offences under duress, and reminding the Lebanese authorities that confessions extracted in such a manner are inadmissible as evidence against the detainees;
- reminding the Lebanese authorities of their obligations under the Convention against Torture, which Lebanon ratified in October 2000.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency President Emile Lahoud  
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**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Samir Jisr  
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Ministry of Justice  
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**Fax: + 961 1 611 142**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

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and to diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 June 2001.