

# ISRAEL/SOUTH LEBANON

## The Khiam detainees: torture and ill-treatment

### I. INTRODUCTION

Some 200 detainees are currently held in the Khiam detention centre situated in south Lebanon. Khiam was set up as a permanent detention centre in early 1985 by the South Lebanon Army (SLA) with Israel's assistance and supervision. Most of the detainees are Lebanese suspected of belonging to armed organizations hostile to Israel and the SLA, or of having been involved in attacks against the Israel Defence Force (IDF), Israel's armed forces, or the SLA in south Lebanon. Many of them have been tortured or ill-treated during interrogation. They appear to be held outside any legal framework and have no access to the outside world.

Israel and the SLA have repeatedly stated, particularly since mid-1991, that the release of the detainees held in Khiam and that of others, held in Israel, was conditional on the release or accounting for of seven Israeli soldiers and eight SLA men missing in Lebanon. Of the seven Israeli soldiers, three are now known to be dead, while the fate of four others remains unknown. Amnesty International has not been able to obtain the names and details of the eight SLA men.

Negotiations on this issue have taken place between Israel, the SLA and other groups in Lebanon, leading to a series of releases from Khiam. On 11 September 1991, 51 detainees were released from Khiam and the bodies of nine members of the group *Hizbullah* were exhumed from a cemetery in Israel and returned to Lebanon. This took place after Israel received confirmation of the death of Rahamim Alsheikh, a soldier who had been missing after an ambush in south Lebanon in February 1986 and whose body is believed to be held by *Hizbullah*. Two days later the body of Samir Assad, another Israeli soldier taken prisoner in Lebanon in April 1983 by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), was returned to Israel. In exchange, Israel allowed the return of Palestinian DFLP activist 'Ali Abu Hilal, who had been expelled in January 1986 on security grounds.

On 21 October 1991, 14 additional detainees were released from Khiam together with 'Ali 'Abbas Fawwaz, a Lebanese believed to be a *Hizbullah* member who was being held in Israel. He had been taken prisoner in south Lebanon in May 1987 reportedly while carrying explosives, tried in Israel receiving a three-year sentence of imprisonment, and held in Ramleh prison apparently under a deportation order since the expiry of his sentence in 1990.

The releases took place after Israel received information confirming that its soldier Yossef Fink, who had gone missing in February 1986 together with Rahamim Alsheikh, was also dead. His body is believed to be held by *Hizbullah*.

Another group of 25 detainees was released from Khiam on 1 December 1991, apparently as a "good will" gesture (lists of detainees released from Khiam since September 1991 are included in Appendix 3). Amnesty International does not know if any other detainee has been released from Khiam since.

The four Israeli soldiers whose fate remains unknown are Zacharia Baumel, Zvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz, who went missing at the battle of Sultan Ya'qub with Syrian forces in Lebanon in June 1982, and Ron Arad, an air force navigator shot down over Lebanon in October 1986. In past years Amnesty International sought information from the Syrian Government and the Lebanese militia *Amal* on these soldiers after reports suggested that the three soldiers missing since 1982 were held in Syria and that the soldier missing since 1986 was held by *Amal*. No response was received, and Amnesty International remains concerned about their fate.

In addition to the 200 or so people still held in Khiam, Amnesty International is aware of 30 others, mostly Lebanese taken prisoner in south Lebanon between 1985 and 1989, who are currently held in Israel and whom the Israeli authorities have indicated could be exchanged for the release or accounting for of their remaining servicemen missing in Lebanon. These 30 detainees include 26 who were tried and sentenced to between one and five years' imprisonment and are now held under administrative detention or deportation orders issued after their sentences expired. Four others, including the Lebanese Shi'a leader Sheikh 'Abd al-Karim 'Ubayd, who was taken prisoner by Israeli forces in south Lebanon in July 1989, have apparently been held under administrative detention orders without having been tried. In February 1992 Amnesty International asked the Israeli Government to clarify the legal situation of these 30 detainees, but received no response.

Six other Lebanese suspected of being members of *Hizbullah* are known to be detained in Israel in an undisclosed detention place. They had been taken prisoner in Beirut at the end of 1987 by the Lebanese Forces militia and secretly moved to Israel in mid-1990. The Israeli authorities refused to acknowledge that they were holding them until the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) discovered them in Israeli custody and informed their families in January 1992. In the same month Amnesty International asked the Israeli Government to clarify the situation of these other detainees, but received no response. They may also be part of the group of detainees the Israeli authorities have indicated could be exchanged.

#### *Amnesty International's mandate and concerns*

Amnesty International works for the protection of individuals against specific human rights violations by governments, as well as against certain abuses by political opposition groups. With regard to governments, Amnesty International works for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoners of conscience, that is people held because of their political, religious or other beliefs, or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language, provided that they have not used or advocated violence. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners, calling for their release if there is no intention of bringing them to trial. It opposes the taking of hostages as well as torture, the death penalty, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" in all circumstances. With regard to abuses by political opposition groups, whether such groups have developed government-like characteristics or not, Amnesty International opposes the taking of hostages, torture and deliberate and arbitrary killings.

Amnesty International is concerned that detainees held in Khiam have been tortured and ill-treated and are held without access to a humanitarian organization such as the ICRC, or to others. It is also concerned that they appear to be held outside any legal framework. Although it is aware that detainees in Khiam may have been involved in violence against Israel and the SLA, Amnesty International believes that, if they are held exclusively in order to compel others to release detainees or provide information about missing persons, they are to be regarded as hostages, and as such should be released immediately and unconditionally. If other detainees held in Israel, and the missing IDF and SLA members, are held by the respective parties for the same reasons, they are also to be regarded as hostages and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

#### *Amnesty International's work on Khiam*

Shortly after the establishment of Khiam as a permanent interrogation and detention centre in 1985, Amnesty International began to receive reports that Lebanese and others, including Palestinians, were being interrogated, tortured and held there outside any legal framework. Testimonies from detainees who had been released in 1985 already indicated a systematic pattern of torture including beatings with electric cables, dousing with water and electric shocks. Detainees told of the direct involvement in interrogation and torture of Israeli personnel. Up to 120 detainees were reported to be in Khiam by November 1985, when Amnesty International sent its first appeals to both the Israeli and SLA authorities.

In the following years Amnesty International repeatedly asked the Israeli and SLA authorities to investigate allegations of torture in Khiam and clarify the situation of individuals who were reported to have been taken prisoner there. These included Hasib and Husayn Turmus, both teachers from Tallusah reportedly taken prisoner in December 1985, and Muhammad 'Ali Nassar, his wife Khairiyyah and their four daughters, reportedly taken prisoner in Kfar Hunah in March 1986 on suspicion of having given shelter to a member of a group hostile to the SLA. At the end of July 1987 Amnesty International appealed on

behalf of 75 people from Hula taken prisoner in June 1987. The body of one of them, Husayn 'Ali Mahmud, aged 51, had reportedly been returned to his family early in July bearing marks of torture. In December 1989 Amnesty International asked for an investigation into the death of two detainees during a protest the month before. Amnesty International also repeatedly appealed for a humanitarian organization such as the ICRC to be allowed access to the detainees in Khiam.

Amnesty International has attempted without success to communicate with the SLA directly as well as through the Israeli authorities. Letters by Amnesty International members sent in 1985 to SLA commander General Antoine Lahad through the Israeli Ministry of Defence were returned by the Ministry's postal services saying that it was "unable to forward letters to any address in the Lebanon". Letters and telegrams sent directly to General Lahad in 1986 and 1987 were not answered, and may not have reached him. Subsequent attempts to seek the assistance of the Israeli authorities in establishing communications with the SLA have remained fruitless. The Israeli Government, as shown below in more detail, has consistently argued that it had no responsibility for the Khiam detention centre.

In this report Amnesty International publishes the information it has available on the Khiam detention centre, including methods of torture and conditions of detention to the extent that they have become known. The main source of information are testimonies of former detainees held at different times between 1985 and 1991. Among these is the testimony of one detainee who was interviewed and medically examined on behalf of Amnesty International outside Lebanon in 1986. He gave a detailed account of torture methods during detention in early 1986. His medical examination found physical and psychological evidence consistent with his allegations of torture. Other former detainees were interviewed in depth by an Amnesty International delegate in Lebanon in October 1991. The information gathered in 1991 was consistent with the evidence available from previous years.

Amnesty International cannot vouch for the veracity of every detail of the testimonies included in this report. Detainees themselves indicated limitations in their ability to describe certain events, for instance because they were hooded. However, Amnesty International believes that the emerging overall picture of torture and isolation is accurate. The names of the detainees whose testimonies are quoted in this report and those of their interrogators have been omitted.

## II. BACKGROUND ON THE DETENTION CENTRE

### A. Historical context

The Khiam detention centre is the main interrogation and detention facility of the SLA, a Lebanese militia armed and supported by Israel. Since the late 1970s the IDF and the SLA have controlled an area of south Lebanon largely bordering Israel. This area now extends northwards at one point to reach the town of Jezzine, and has become known as Israel's "security zone". With Israel's assistance, the SLA has effectively taken over the functions of the Lebanese Government in that zone.

In 1978, following a major military operation by Israel in south Lebanon, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a multinational peace-keeping force, was deployed in south Lebanon "for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area". Since then the UNIFIL mandate has been extended every six months, and the force has yet to fulfil its mission. The area in which over 5,700 United Nations (UN) soldiers are currently stationed largely overlaps with that controlled by the SLA and the IDF, at least in the vicinity of the border with Israel (see map in Appendix 1).

The SLA is believed to be formed by some 3,000 men, mostly Christians, although Druze and Shi'a are known to have joined. Men have reportedly been conscripted, others have been detained apparently for refusing to serve. The militia is commanded by General Antoine Lahad, a former Lebanese Army officer. A member of the SLA is locally often referred to as a "Lahdi". General Lahad took over the SLA militia following the death in 1984 of its founder Major Sa'ad Haddad, another officer who left the Lebanese Army and declared in 1979 a "State of Free Lebanon" in the border area under his control.

Until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon of 1982, the IDF and the SLA were engaged in military confrontations with Palestinian armed groups and their allied Lebanese militias. Following the withdrawal of Palestine Liberation Organization forces from Lebanon in 1982, the IDF and the SLA have been fighting against Lebanese groups including the Shi'a-based *Hizbullah* and *Amal*; the Druze-based Progressive Socialist Party; the Lebanese Communist Party; the Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon; and the Syrian Nationalist Social Party. Currently the most active group militarily engaged with the IDF and SLA forces in south Lebanon, appears to be *Hizbullah*.

The Khiam detention centre, located on a hill overlooking the town of Khiam in the

"enclave" controlled by Israel and the SLA, is in a complex built as a barracks by French Mandate forces in 1933. Some of the current detention facilities were originally designed as stables for horses. The complex was taken over by the Lebanese Army in 1943. In 1978, following Israel's major military intervention in south Lebanon, the SLA took control of the barracks and began using them as a local headquarters and interrogation centre. The barracks became a more permanent interrogation and detention facility in the early months of 1985, during Israel's official withdrawal, completed in June 1985, from the areas of Lebanon it had occupied in 1982. In April 1985 the large Israeli-run Ansar detention camp near Nabatiyyah, also in south Lebanon, was closed by the retreating IDF.

## B. Physical lay-out and administration

The Khiam detention centre can be described as consisting of a detention facility, an interrogation area and the SLA quarters. These areas are built up around a central yard (see map in Appendix 2).

### *The detention facility*

The detention facility is divided into five sections. The three main ones are built within the old French barracks, and contain a double row of cells. Each cell has a door with a look-through covered by a metal shutter. Most individual cells have no source of light, but in most cells some light enters through small ventilation holes in the ceiling. These three sections are separated from the central yard by a three-meter high wall topped with barbed wire. A fourth section houses women inmates. A fifth one, the most modern, was added next to the women's section. In addition to cells, each section has its own sanitation facilities, kitchen and guard rooms.

### *Section I: the "Lower Prison"*

Detainees refer to this section as Section I or the "Lower Prison" (*al-sijn al-tahtani*). They also call it the "Old Prison". The SLA designates it as Section 111. It contains primarily or exclusively detainees who are being interrogated. The section today includes at least four isolation cells (*zanazin infiradiyyah*) measuring less than one by one metre; six cells measuring less than two by two metres; and seven or eight cells measuring two by one-and-a-half metres which sometimes were so overcrowded to earn the section the additional name of "Cemetery Prison" (*habsat maqbarah*). Until 1988 a very small cell measuring 50 by 50 cm and 70 cm high was used in this section for interrogation purposes. Detainees called it "chicken coop" (*al-qin*).

### *Section II: the "Middle Prison"*

Section II or the "Middle Prison" (*al-sijn al-wastani*) is designated Section 122 by the SLA. It has five cells measuring about two by two metres. They hold up to six detainees each. In 1986, 14 cells of similar size were added to accommodate the growing inflow of detainees. The section includes a nurse's room with a small clinic and a guard room. Attached to Section II, protruding into the central yard, is a walled-in exercise yard of about 12 by 12 metres; the ceiling is replaced by a mesh of barbed wire. Detainees call it the "sun room" (*ghurfat lil-shams*). Cell 5 in Section II is referred to as "the grave" (*al-qabr*) as it is particularly dark.

### *Section III: the "Upper Prison"*

The cells in Section III or the "Upper Prison" (*al-sijn al-fawqani*), officially Section 133, were built in 1985. There are two rows of 10 cells. Each cell measures over two by two metres and holds up to six detainees. Section III includes a "chicken coop", but this cell now appears to be for punishment rather than interrogation.

### *The women's section*

Women detainees are detained separately from the men. They are in a section near the interrogation area. The section includes six ordinary cells and a small isolation cell, with a shower, kitchen, interrogation room and guard room. In early 1990 six ordinary cells and an isolation cell, as well as an exercise yard, were added to this section.

### *Section IV: the "Modern Prison"*

At the end of 1987 Section 144, known among detainees as Section IV or the "Modern Prison" (*al-sijn al-mustahdath*), was added to the detention complex. Built near the women's section, Section IV includes two rows of six cells and two rows of three cells. Each cell measures about three by three metres. A separate cell, Cell No. 8, measures about four by four metres and is considered the largest of the detention facilities. Section IV includes four small isolation cells and an exercise yard.

### *The interrogation area*

Although there are a few rooms used for interrogation in some of the detention sections, detainees are interrogated mainly in five rooms located between Section I and the women's section, next to the prison director's office. Throughout the period of interrogation detainees are kept in isolation cells, or in ordinary cells said to contain "collaborators", or are left in one of the yards or corridors.

### *The SLA quarters*

SLA members man watchtowers placed at the detention centre's five corners and guard the main gate. They have living quarters and a communications room near the prison entrance, as well as toilets or showers against one of the main walls. Five visiting rooms, built across the main entrance, were reportedly converted into bedrooms for the prison commander and other staff after family visits were suspended in 1988. The family visits that were occasionally arranged since then have taken place either in the interrogation area or in the prison director's office.

In the general area of the SLA quarters there is also the central kitchen, where food is prepared for detainees and guards, as well as offices, storage rooms, a water tank and a fuel depot.

#### *Administrative structure*

The Khiam detention centre is run by the SLA apparently under a dual command structure. One is headed by a prison director, who oversees interrogation and is in overall charge of the centre. The other is headed by a prison commander, who is in charge of the guards and other military personnel staffing the centre; since 1988 he has also supervised the sections housing detainees who have completed their interrogation.

There are apparently nine interrogators, working in shifts under the supervision of the prison director. The sections housing detainees who have completed their interrogation are guarded by two units of 13 guards each who work two-day shifts. Women detainees are apparently guarded by two units of three women, also working two-day shifts.

### **C. The detainees**

The 200 or so detainees currently held in Khiam include people detained since mid-1985, although the turn-over is said to be constant. At its peak the centre may have held up to 350 detainees, including about 35 women.

On 11 September 1991, 51 detainees were released, reducing the number of those held at the time to 224, according to the newly freed detainees. An additional 14 detainees were released on 21 October 1991, bringing the total figure of detainees down to 210. However, a number of people were reported to have been taken prisoner between 11 September and 21 October: their exact number could not be ascertained, but it was thought to be around 15 or 20. The total number of detainees by the end of October could thus be estimated at 225 - 230. On 1 December 1991 a further 25 detainees were released. Amnesty International is not aware of further releases or new detentions since. The current number of detainees is estimated at 200, possibly slightly over.

The vast majority of the detainees in Khiam are Lebanese, mostly from the "enclave".

They include Muslims as well as Druze and Christians. Many are believed to belong to Lebanese militias and political movements active in south Lebanon against Israeli and SLA forces. They include *Hizbullah*, *Amal*, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon, the Syrian Nationalist Social Party and the Progressive Socialist Party. A few detainees are believed to belong to Palestinian organizations. Others have reportedly been detained for refusing to serve in the SLA, or for encouraging others not to serve, or to put pressure on relatives.

Of 210 detainees known to be detained in October 1991 in Khiam 20 were not Lebanese. They included 13 Palestinians, four Syrians, two Kurds and one Algerian. Of the 210, 16 were women -- 15 Lebanese and one Palestinian. Among the women still detained is Suha Fawwaz Beshara, from Deir Mimas, who is believed to have tried to assassinate General Lahad by shooting and injuring him in Marja'yun on 7 November 1988. During the first four months of her detention she reportedly had no mattress or blankets, was not permitted to take showers, and received only one meal a day. Her circumstances are said to have improved now, although she is believed to be held in isolation. The one Palestinian woman detained in Khiam is Kifah Subhi 'Afifi, who was reportedly taken prisoner on 24 October 1988 while involved in an armed operation near Kfar Kila.

Detainees have reportedly included minors as well as people in their sixties and over. One of the youngest, Rabah Shahrur from Kfar Hammam, was perhaps 12 when he was taken prisoner. He was kept in Khiam for eight months in 1988, apparently to put pressure on his detained older brother to confess. Another minor, Ahmad Nimr Munther from Markaba, was 14 when taken prisoner in 1989. He is believed to be still in Khiam.

#### **D. Israel's role**

In addition to exercising direct military control on the SLA "enclave" in south Lebanon, the Israeli authorities reportedly run a "civil administration" jointly with the SLA and carry out regular visits to the Khiam detention centre. According to former detainees, Israeli military or intelligence officers have a constant hand in the affairs of the centre. Their visible activities reportedly include regular inspections of the detention facilities and, at least until 1988, direct involvement in the interrogation and torture of detainees.

Israel's role with regard to detention in south Lebanon, however, extends beyond the direct presence of its personnel in the Khiam detention centre. People have reportedly been taken prisoner by the IDF in the "enclave" and then either transferred to a prison inside Israel or handed over to the SLA for interrogation and incarceration in Khiam. One detainee held between 1985 and 1991 reported the role of Israeli officers in his own case as follows:

"As I was driving [in the "enclave"], two Israeli officers stopped my car and searched

it. When they found explosives, they arrested me, and called a car with two Lahdi soldiers. The latter put me in their car, blindfolded me, and tied a rope around my hands in front of me. The two soldiers kept punching me in the eyes, one of them even as he was driving the car. They took me to [Marja'yun military headquarters], where they registered my name and took my car papers. Then, after about an hour, they drove me to Khiam, where I was taken straight into interrogation. There was an Israeli there -- I got to know him later, his name is 'Y' -- and a 'Lahdi' officer... 'Y' had two Israeli assistants. They spoke broken Arabic."

#### *General supervisory role*

Between 1985 and 1988 a man known by detainees as "Y" [name omitted] was believed to be the Israeli officer in charge of detainees' affairs in Khiam, especially with regard to interrogation. Former detainees say he wore civilian clothes and was referred to by SLA members as "shaikh", a deferential title. "Y" and other Israeli officers appear to have worked regular hours every day except Saturday, although they are not believed to have resided in the detention centre complex.

Former detainees say they preferred to discuss prison affairs directly with "Y" or other Israeli officers in Khiam. This is because the SLA, apparently by admission of some SLA members themselves, would not introduce changes in Khiam without Israeli authorization. "Y" is said to have occasionally intervened, for example, during detainees' hunger strikes. During a protest in November 1989 during which two detainees are said to have died, Israeli soldiers were reportedly seen taking up positions in Section III, where the protests started, and a senior Israeli officer is said to have later carried out an investigation.

An Israeli officer known by detainees as "A" [name omitted] replaced "Y" some time in 1988. According to former detainees, both "Y" and "A" spoke Arabic well. However, unlike "Y", "A" wore a military uniform and was only involved in supervision of the detention centre, not interrogation. "A" is believed to have been replaced in late 1989 or early 1990.

Throughout the 1985 to 1988 period, Israeli officers reportedly made frequent inspections of the Khiam detention centre, accompanied by "Y" who used to speak openly to detainees in their cells. Detainees describe the Israeli presence within Khiam as less visible since 1988, in some respects "faceless". Although visits are said to have continued, direct contact between detainees and Israeli officers diminished. For example, detainees report being told to face the wall at the back of their cell if visiting Israeli officers wished to look inside.

*Involvement in interrogation and torture*

Former detainees have provided evidence to Amnesty International indicating that Israeli intelligence or military officers, or both, were actively involved in the interrogation of detainees in Khiam in the 1985 to 1988 period. Detainees have reported being interrogated and tortured by Israelis, or in the presence of Israelis.

Specifically, the Israeli official in Khiam called "Y" is described as having participated in interrogation, including torture, even though he usually played only a supervisory role. At times "Y" was reportedly assisted by other Israelis. Detainees say it was not unusual for "Y" to engage in a general political discussion face to face with a detainee (after the hood normally used during interrogation had been removed).

One detainee taken prisoner at the end of 1986 and released at the end of 1989 told Amnesty International that he had been beaten and kicked repeatedly by "Y" and other Israeli interrogators over a period of days. After confessing to being a member of one of the groups opposed to Israel and the SLA, he recalls:

"Then he stopped beating me and asked, 'What operations have you been carrying out?' I told him that there were no such operations and that I had no weapons or knew nothing about weapons. I told him, 'I am political, not military.' ... He asked me about my friends in the organization. I told him, 'We have a secret organization, so we do not know each other. I only know who is responsible, but I do not know his real name.' He did not believe me. He threatened to blow up my house, 'You are a terrorist!', and he accused me of going up to Saida regularly to receive instructions. He asked me if I liked the Israeli army. I told him, 'No'. 'Why not?', he asked me. 'Because you occupy my country, and harass women and old people', I replied. He said: 'We are staying here forever. Do not think that your military operations will get us out.'

"Then he wanted to talk politics. He gave me a cigarette and coffee and took the hood off my head. He let me sit on a chair, with my hands still cuffed. This was the first time that I actually saw him since the moment I was taken prisoner. He said, 'My name is 'Y'. Do not be scared. Let us talk politics. I am a democratic person.' Then he began asking me questions, 'Why are you a communist?', I told him why. 'Why do you hate Zionism?', 'Because you first took the land of the Palestinians, and then you came to Lebanon', I said. 'We came to rid you of the Palestinians, not to occupy Lebanon', he replied. And then I said, 'The Palestinians would not have come here if you had not driven them off their land. You have killed Lebanese people here. We carry out operations against you to

get you off our land.' Then he put the hood back over my head and told a guard, 'Put him in the room with the snake'. 'Why?', I asked him. 'I will teach you how to liberate your land', he said. The guard took me to the yard outside, suspended me from the electricity pole, and began pouring water over me. Then he started beating me on my behind. He would douse me with water, beat me, and pour water." [The detainee says he was then taken back into interrogation].

Other former detainees referred to similar encounters with "Y". One, held between 1986 and 1988, says that "Y" came into the room in which the detainee had been beaten with an electric cable for about half an hour by an SLA interrogator, shortly after the detainee's arrival in Khiam:

"Then 'Y' came in. I found out his name later. He was being very nice. 'Take five minutes to think', he said. 'I do not need five minutes', I told him. Then 'Y' said to the guard, 'Take him outside, take off his clothes, and douse him with water. This one has got a hard head.' The guard took me to a yard outside, and they took inside a man who was already there who had been arrested at the same time as me. They made me stand against the wall and poured hot and cold water over me. After 15 minutes, my friend and I traded places again and the interrogation continued."

Israeli interrogators, including "Y", apparently invariably became involved in interrogation if it concerned actions against the IDF. One detainee, held between 1985 and 1990, reported:

"After 12 days, they took me back into interrogation, and made a new accusation: that I had been involved in the 'disappearance' of two Israeli soldiers in 1982 who are still missing [the episode reportedly took place

near Beirut during the invasion of Lebanon and the soldiers may have died in an attack rather than having been captured]. This time I was tortured very badly. They used stronger voltage when giving me electric shocks. An Israeli would come in from time to time. He said that he was responsible for the Marja'yun area and that his name was 'Y'. Once he came into the room just after I had been beaten with a steel rod over the head, and the blood was coming down over my eyes. He took off my hood. His manner was very nice, and he gave me a cigarette. He started asking me about the two soldiers. I denied any knowledge of the incident, and gave proof that I was in a different area at the time of the incident. He decided that I had not been involved, and the interrogation ended."

In some instances "Y" and other Israeli officials reportedly interrogated and tortured

detainees outside Khiam. The following is the testimony of a detainee, released in 1991, who says he was taken prisoner by SLA members in Tayyibah in 1985 and brought to the local SLA headquarters:

"There were Israelis there. I recognized them because I had seen them in town before ... I was made to stand outside. They put a blindfold over my eyes, plastic handcuffs in front, and they took me inside where 'Y' was. Here they took the blindfold off, and he started asking me questions, mostly about my life. He was trying to find out if I had been part of the resistance against Israel. I denied any form of participation. Then they started beating me and kicking me all over my body, 'Y' and perhaps a total of five 'Lahdis'. They would go in and out. 'Y' kept on asking me questions about my role in the resistance. They had taken my top clothes off and they used my belt to beat me on the genitals.

"After about half-an-hour 'B' [name omitted] came in. He was responsible for Tayyibah and wore military clothes. He spoke with 'Y' in Hebrew and then left the room again. He returned after five minutes carrying what looked like a military telephone [with a crank] and 12-volt batteries. They put wires on the middle of my two index fingers and asked me if I was thirsty and wanted to drink something. 'Of course', I said. They brought me a cup of water, poured it over my fingers, and started turning the crank. I was jumping all over the place. You do not really know any more what you are doing. They would ask a question, and when I did not answer, they would shock me again. This went on until four in the morning, I still had my watch. Then they put me in a Mercedes with three others, all blindfolded, and they took us to Khiam."

Some detainees were reportedly moved from Khiam to Israeli detention facilities in the "enclave" or in Israel itself for further interrogation by Israeli intelligence officers, before being returned to Khiam. One former detainee recounted to Amnesty International how towards the end of his interrogation in Khiam in 1988 he was taken in a jeep to Haifa, along with two other detainees, by two Israeli officers. He said he was questioned intensively and in detail for 18 days about issues such as usage of buildings and roads in areas of Lebanon, but was not ill-treated. He was then returned to Khiam.

Another detainee, interrogated in 1987, recalled that after he had confessed to membership of an armed organization, 12 days after he had been taken prisoner, he was taken by car to the Lebanese-Israeli border near the village of Kfar Kila. There he says he was interrogated by an Israeli officer, in the company of "Y" who had come along, about his organization, its structure, and its relationship with other organizations. The detainee said he was not ill-treated, and was then returned to his cell in Khiam later that day.

Women detainees report having seen Israelis in military or civilian clothes. They say that normally they would not have contact with them, but that Israelis did question Suha Beshara and Kifah 'Afifi. Others have reported that both these women were temporarily taken to Israel for interrogation shortly after having been taken prisoner.

Amnesty International has no evidence of Israeli participation in interrogation in the Khiam detention centre after the departure of "Y" in 1988. However, detainees doing chores, as well as women detainees whose cells are near the interrogation section, say they saw Israeli officers enter the interrogation section after 1988.

#### *The Israeli Government's position*

The Israeli Government has stated that since the completion of the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985, it has not been responsible for maintaining law and order in any part of Lebanon. The Israeli authorities have consistently denied responsibility for the Khiam detention centre, and for the actions of the SLA in general, although on occasion they have suggested that they were working to ensure detainees in Khiam were treated humanely.

In October 1986 the Israeli embassy in the United States answered Amnesty International's appeals for an investigation of allegations of torture in Khiam involving Israeli personnel. It stated:

"Israel categorically denies that any ill-treatment was meted out to detainees under the supervision, or in the presence, of her military personnel."

In December 1986 the Israeli Attorney General wrote to Amnesty International:

"While Israel does have good relations with the South Lebanon Army (SLA), it is in no position to dictate to them how to cope with the grave threats they face. I can assure you, however, whatever limited influence we do have is used to ameliorate conditions for those held in custody by the SLA."

In January 1987 Uri Lubrani, the Israeli Government's coordinator of activities in Lebanon, told Amnesty International delegates in Israel that although the conditions of detention in Khiam could be improved, they were better than elsewhere in Lebanon. He said Israeli officials were instructed not to take part in interrogations and in general not to be involved in what went on in Khiam, although Israeli officials did visit Khiam in order to restrain the SLA from excesses.

In a letter to Amnesty International in May 1987, the Military Secretary to the Minister of Defence reiterated the Israeli Government's position that the SLA was directly

responsible for the Khiam detention centre. He added:

"Under such conditions, while we are investing prolonged efforts to limit as much as possible the presence of the Israel Defence Forces in South Lebanon and our influence there, we also try to convince the South Lebanese Army to adopt usual methods of operation and ways of conduct, even if in Lebanon these are considered to be exceptional and unusual, and this also applies to the subject of El-Hiam and the visit of International Red Cross delegates there.

"We do believe that the conditions prevailing today at El-Hiam, which according to the best of our knowledge, are better than those in any other detention installation in Lebanon, are, inter alia, the result of our continued efforts."

In January 1989 Amnesty International asked the Israeli authorities for information on the situation of Suha Beshara, who had been taken prisoner by the SLA after the attempt on the life of General Lahad. Reports at the time suggested that she had been moved to Israel for further interrogation. In response, Mr Lubrani wrote in March 1989:

"We understand that Suha Beshara, who is allegedly a member of the Lebanese Communist Party, was detained in Lebanon after having shot and severely wounded General Lahad. It is to be stressed that this is strictly an internal Lebanese matter: an attempted assassination of a Lebanese army officer planned and executed by a Lebanese woman on sovereign Lebanese soil; the latter was arrested by Lebanese members of General Lahad's family and friends and, to the best of our knowledge, is being detained in a Lebanese detention facility. Upon his release from hospital, General Lahad stated publicly that it was his intention to bring Suha Beshara to trial. The government of Israel is therefore not a party to this matter -- neither *de jure* nor *de facto*. It is recommended that any further inquiries in this matter be addressed to the appropriate authorities in Lebanon."

Amnesty International is not aware of any trial involving Suha Beshara. In January 1989 the Lebanese Government reportedly requested that she be handed over to its officials. She remains held in Khiam.

### **III. DETENTION, INTERROGATION AND TORTURE**

#### **A. Detention: absence of legal framework**

Those held in Khiam have been taken prisoner in a number of ways. Commonly, SLA members in military or civilian clothing, sometimes accompanied by people in plain clothes apparently including Israelis, visit the home in the "enclave" of the person they are looking for. They ask the person to go with them for "a discussion" at a local SLA headquarters. The person is then placed in a military jeep or civilian car and taken to Khiam, sometimes after a detour past the local SLA headquarters. Sometimes people are stopped at a checkpoint on a road within the "enclave" or at one of the crossing points between the "enclave" and the rest of Lebanon. If a decision to take them prisoner is made, they are usually taken to Khiam, as above. Others may be intercepted within the "enclave" while carrying out an armed attack.

Prisoners have also been taken during military incursions by the IDF and the SLA outside the "enclave". These operations are often directed against a village where hostile armed groups are believed to be based, or from where attacks are believed to have been launched. During such incursions people have been rounded up and taken to Khiam. This is reported to have happened, for example, in the village of Shaqra on 18 February 1986, the day after two Israeli soldiers, now known to be dead, were ambushed in a nearby area.

At the gate of the Khiam detention centre and while still in the car, a hood is placed over the detainee, a blindfold is tied over the hood, and steel or plastic cuffs are put on the hands, and sometimes the feet, if they had not been placed on the detainee beforehand. The detainee is then driven into the centre.

The detainee's name and details are then registered and they receive a medical examination, apparently by a nurse. Personal belongings are taken and stored. Detainees usually have to wait until after the initial phase of their interrogation before they are issued with the detention centre's clothes. They are also given a number, usually after they have been interrogated and transferred to the regular cells.

The detainees in the Khiam detention centre are apparently held outside any legal framework. They do not appear to be regarded as prisoners of war and Amnesty International knows of no warrants, charges, court hearings or sentences, or any other form of legal process. Detainees are usually taken to the interrogation section shortly after arrival and then moved to the regular cells for an open-ended detention that for many has lasted several months or years.

Detainees have been released individually or in small groups, for example on Christian or Muslim holidays. Others have been released as part of a process of prisoner exchanges between Israel, the SLA and other groups. At the time of release, detainees receive their personal belongings and are apparently asked to sign a statement that they will not repeat the acts for which they were supposedly held in Khiam, and that if they do they risk being taken back to Khiam "for life" (*mu'abbed*). One detainee reported that "A", the Israeli officer in charge of Khiam at the time, had told him prior to his release in November 1989 that he had three options: to collaborate, to return to his village but remain under town arrest, or to leave the "enclave". He left the "enclave".

Released detainees are allowed to go to their homes within the "enclave" or are taken to the edge of the "enclave" and expelled with orders not to return. Those to be expelled are sometimes handed over to the ICRC within the "enclave" or at one of the crossing points between the "enclave" and the rest of Lebanon. For example, on 11 September 1991 a hand-over to the ICRC of 29 released detainees took place in Marja'yun. The ICRC then takes the former detainees to other destinations in Lebanon.

## **B. Interrogation and torture methods**

Interrogation is usually directed at obtaining information on detainees' suspected participation in, or knowledge of, activities against Israel and/or the SLA. For example, detainees are questioned about attacks planned or executed in the "enclave", weapons' caches, details of the organizations they are suspected of belonging to, and names and whereabouts of other suspected members of these organizations.

After the detainee has confessed or given information, the interrogation sessions could end with a cup of coffee and a cigarette together with his or her interrogators. An interrogator may write down a statement. The detainee is then transferred to the regular cells, although he or she may be called back for further interrogation if new evidence emerges.

Perhaps depending on the interrogators on duty, a detainee may either be questioned upon arrival before any violence occurs, or be tortured for hours without any questions being asked, presumably to be "softened up". The following two testimonies bear witness to these two different treatments. The first is that of a man taken prisoner at the end of 1986 and released in 1989:

"After I arrived in Khiam, they took me straight into interrogation. I was told to lie down on the floor. 'Y' [who was already known to the detainee] was there, and he started asking me questions... He asked me for my name, my brothers' names, the jobs we hold, my father's job, my religion (whether I was Shi'a or Sunni),

and what organization I belonged to. I answered all his questions but told him that I did not belong to any organization. Then he started kicking me in the stomach."

The following is the testimony of a detainee taken prisoner with others in mid-1985 and released in 1990:

"We arrived in Khiam at noon. We were taken out of the car. Not a word was spoken.

They put a sack over my head and a blindfold over that, and they placed plastic handcuffs on my hands behind my back. I asked what was going on, but no one answered. They took us to a large yard, and from there to a smaller yard, about three by four metres. They put me down on the ground. Then they brought an electric cable about three centimetres in diameter and started hitting me with it.

They also poured water over me, which worsened the pain. I was beaten everywhere, so much that blood started coming out of my mouth, my nose and my back. I was screaming because of the pain, along with the three others who were with me. Nobody could hear us, because there was an engine running there. Still no one asked us any questions, and they did not respond to ours. This went on for three hours without interruption. Then they took me to a wall which, I saw much later, had maybe 10 windows; from each protruded a metal bar. They hung each of us from one of these by our handcuffs, so that I was barely reaching the ground with my toes. They had taken off all our clothes. A soldier kept pouring cold water over us. Then they started taking us inside by turns. They came for me after about an hour. That is when the interrogation began."

Torture appears to be practised systematically in the Khiam detention centre, in a variety of methods, often in combination. In addition to beatings all over the body by punches or kicks, sometimes aimed at the testicles, the methods that appear to be most commonly used are the following:

### **1. *Electric shock***

This method has been described as follows: while the person is seated or lying on the ground, handcuffed and hooded with a blindfold, an interrogator attaches electrodes to two fingers (one on each hand) or other parts of the victim's body and starts turning the crank of an apparatus producing electric current. Detainees who said they saw this machine said it looked like an old telephone, or a military field telephone, attached to a battery. The faster the crank is turned, the higher the voltage that streams through the wires. Machines corresponding to this description are known by Amnesty International to have been used in electric shock torture in other countries.

Interrogators apparently vary the intensity of the current according to the responsiveness of the victim. If the finger treatment proves inconclusive, electrodes may then be applied to one or more of the following: tongue, earlobes, nose, toes, penis, and, especially in the case of women, nipples. Sometimes water is poured over the parts to which the electrodes are applied to enhance the effect of the shock.

The following is the testimony of a detainee held between 1988 and 1991 who says he was tortured shortly after arriving in Khiam, including by being subjected on two separate occasions to electric shocks. This is how he described the first session of electric shock torture:

"I was taken outside to a corridor in Section I and made to stand there for an hour.

Then a guard took me into an interrogation room. The person there introduced himself as 'R' [name omitted]. I found out later that his name was [name omitted]. He started asking me questions, 'Which organization do you belong to?' etc., and I would say, 'I do not belong to any organization'. He then threatened to bring in my relatives, and began beating me, first with his hands.

Then he brought in electricity. The wires are about two meters long. He put them on my two index fingers and began turning the crank, slowly at first, then faster and faster. Then he said, 'This is not enough for you'. He kept beating me. Then he took off my trousers and underwear and put one wire on my penis, and the other on my finger. He started turning the crank, faster and faster. I was jumping up and down. In the violence of this, the wire slipped off my penis. He repeated the electric shocks two or three times over a two-hour period. All the time he was pouring water over the areas where he had put the wires. After this I was taken to an isolation cell".

A detainee held between in 1987 and 1991 said he was repeatedly subjected to electric shocks. He described one such session as follow:

"They came back after two hours and asked: 'Do you want to talk now?' I told them that I had nothing to say. They told me to sit down on a chair. According to the voices, there were two interrogators: one who did the beating, and one who was asking questions and writing things down. They asked me again about membership. I told them that I was a high school student and did not belong to any party. At this point they brought in an electricity machine with a crank. (I did not see it then, I saw it several days later). They put wires on my two [index] fingers and shocked me. I screamed. They did this about three times, each time asking if I was ready to confess. But I told them no. Then they put a wire on the tip of my tongue and shocked me twice. I lost consciousness. When I came to, I was in a different room ... My head was very painful. I heard voices behind a wall. They asked, 'Who is our neighbour?' I gave them my name. They said

that the same things had been happening to them."

## **2. Beating with an electric cable**

Most former detainees have reported being beaten repeatedly with a thick electric cable (*kurbaj kahraba*). Typically, an interrogator beats a detainee lying prostrate on the ground, hitting all parts of the body. Beatings with this kind of cable has also been reported against detainees waiting in the outside yard in between interrogation sessions, or as punishment for violations of the centre's rules.

The following is the testimony of a man held between in 1987 and 1991. He says he had already been interrogated for one day, given electric shocks and spent the night in isolation when he was taken for further interrogation:

"In the morning, around 11 am ... a 'Lahdi' came and asked, 'Are you [name omitted]?' I said, 'yes'. He came into the cell, put the hood and blindfold over my head and cuffed my hands in front. Then he took me to a room with an interrogator. He told me to sit down on a chair. He asked me, 'Do you have anything to confess today?' I told him, 'Nothing'. He then told me to lie face-down on the floor. He brought an electric cable and began to hit me, all the while asking me questions. He was hitting me on my back and legs. This went on for about an hour."

Another detainee released in 1989 was taken prisoner at the end of 1986 and accused of hiding weapons. He recalls:

"[An interrogator] started hitting me with an electric cable. He said, 'I am going to hit you 100 times. Keep count, and when I ask you how far I have got and you get it wrong, we will start from the beginning'. After 20 lashes he asked me how many I had had. When I said 20 he said, 'you lied, there were only 19', and continued to hit me. I counted them. He hit me 120 times, but I did not confess to anything."

Sometimes detainees are beaten with the electric cable on the soles of their feet, a practice known as *falaqa*. A detainee held between 1986 and 1991 described it as follows:

"While I was lying on the floor, [an interrogator] put my feet on the back of a chair and began to hit the soles of my feet. That was extremely painful. He kept cursing me. He was asking me where the weapons were. He accused me of planning to carry out operations and of inciting people in the 'enclave' against Israel. I denied all of the charges."

## **3. Suspension from an electricity pole**

Between interrogation sessions detainees are frequently suspended from an electricity pole (*'amud kahraba*) located in an outside yard between Sections I and II. Most commonly, a detainee's handcuffs are slung through another pair of handcuffs, or a chain or rope, hanging down from a cross-bar attached to the pole. Detainees are usually suspended so that their toes barely reach the ground. They may be kept like that for several hours, exposed to the elements. In addition, they may be stripped of their clothes and doused with water at frequent intervals. They may also be beaten with electric cables.

A detainee held between 1985 and 1991 said he was suspended in this way after several sessions of torture including electric shock:

"Then I was taken to the yard and was suspended from a pole by my shackles... First they put a stone under my feet when they suspended me, but after two hours of standing like that they pulled the stone from underneath me and I hung for another 12 hours, standing only on my toes. My hands were hurting enormously..."

#### **4. Dousing with water**

Detainees are frequently doused with water when they are in the outside yard, for example while they are suspended from the electricity pole in between interrogation sessions. Sometimes hot and cold water is used alternatively. The detainees may be clothed or unclothed, even during the freezing weather in winter. The following testimony is that of a detainee taken prisoner in early 1989 and released in 1991.

" Then they took me to a yard and tied my hands to an electricity pole. They hung me so that only my toes touched the ground. Then they poured cold water over me. I was there for about three hours. Each time my clothes started to dry a bit, they would pour more water over my head from a bucket or something like that. Then they returned me to the cell with the 'collaborators'."

#### **5. Painful postures**

Several detainees have described the pain and physical exhaustion they suffered by being forced to keep their arms raised while standing or kneeling, or by being made to perform other forms of physically demanding activity. A detainee taken prisoner at the end of 1988 and released in 1991 recalled:

"They took me outside and made me sit on my knees with my arms raised for about one and a half hours. Then I was taken back into interrogation but I did not

answer their questions. They put me in the yard with my arms raised for another half an hour, and again took me into interrogation. I still said nothing, so they returned me to my cell, where I spent three days without any interrogation."

Another detainee taken prisoner at the end of 1986 said:

The interrogator made me stand up and sit down a number of times to exhaust me. He also made me lift up a chair while I was on my knees and threatened to beat me the moment I would let the chair down. Eventually I had to drop it, and he began to beat me."

## **6. Deprivation of sleep, food and hygiene**

During the initial period of interrogation, detainees are usually deprived of sleep and food, clearly in an attempt to exhaust them physically and mentally. This is done by forcing detainees to stand in between interrogation sessions, or by beating them or pouring water over them at regular intervals while they are kept in a corridor or in one of the yards. During this period detainees are usually further weakened by the provision of insufficient food. Although they might be given a cup of water from the first day on, detainees often receive no food at all for the first day or so, and then receive it only in limited quantities. Frequently detainees are not allowed to use a toilet for many days, and must relieve themselves in their trousers, if they are clothed, or anywhere on the ground. Those held in isolation cells apparently can use plastic buckets.

The following is the testimony of a detainee held between 1986 and 1988, who says he had already been interrogated and beaten, including on the soles of his feet, throughout the first day of his detention:

"It had become evening, perhaps it was after midnight, because it was very quiet. Then they took me into a yard between the 'old prison' and the interrogation rooms, and they shackled me by my leg to a door. I was lying on the ground and trying to sleep. But each time somebody came through

that door, I would be jerked around. I could hear the voice of a friend, [name and details omitted], who was standing against a pole near the entrance to the 'old prison', a few metres away from me. He screamed each time they poured water over him. I stayed there until the next morning. I had no food or water."

A detainee held between 1986 and 1989 says he was kept undressed during the day while in the yard and while being interrogated. He also testified the following:

"The first two days they gave me no food. They would actually bring you food, but before you can touch it they take you into interrogation. They will give you water when you ask for it, but usually with a delay, sometimes of an hour. Or they will say, 'You have to confess first. You will not eat, drink, or go to the toilet until you confess.' In fact, I did get to eat and drink, but I did not see a toilet for 10 days, and had to relieve myself in my trousers, at night, or just anywhere during the day".

Another detainee taken prisoner at the end of 1985 and released in 1991 reported being interrogated for 23 days and tortured in a variety of ways, including with electric shocks. He said:

"I had no real sleep in this period, and very little to eat: two pieces of toast and a cup of water for breakfast, and the same for lunch and dinner. In those 23 days, there were eight days when they tied my hands behind my back rather than in the front, which was much tougher. They would take me to a toilet every 48 hours. In between, I had to relieve myself in my trousers. When they take you to the toilet, they don't let you walk. My feet were cuffed, so they dragged me over the ground to the toilet."

## **7. Hood and handcuffs**

Upon arrival in the Khiam detention centre and during interrogation, detainees are normally hooded with thick dark canvas sacks, described as dirty and smelly. To make sure that they cannot see, a blindfold is usually placed over the sack. In addition, detainees' hands, and sometimes feet, are placed in steel or plastic cuffs. The plastic cuffs can be particularly painful when tightened because they can cut into the flesh. The sack and cuffs are apparently removed when a detainee is put in an isolation cell or held in a cell with suspected "collaborators".

The main reason for the hooding seems to be to disorient detainees and induce fear, rather than to prevent victims from identifying interrogators. Detainees have reported that their hood was removed towards the end of their interrogation in the presence of their interrogators. Some detainees wearing hoods are hit, exploiting their inability to expect the blows and thus increasing the distress and degradation caused by the blows.

## **8. The isolation cell**

Throughout the period of interrogation, detainees' only contacts are their interrogators and possibly one or more "collaborators". Detainees under interrogation are often kept in

isolation cells, said to measure less than one metre per side and to be so dark that detainees are sometimes unable to discern the food on their plates. One detainee reported having spent 60 consecutive days in such a cell in 1985, sleeping in a sitting position. Sometimes, to increase the distress, two detainees would be placed together in the same isolation cell for several days. In these cells they may be able to hear the moaning and screaming of other detainees.

This is the testimony of a detainee held between in 1985 and 1990, who says he had been interrogated and tortured for three days before being put into an isolation cell:

"That evening they put me and my friend [name omitted] in an isolation cell. It measures 90 cm by 90 cm. We could not lie down in it. They kept us there for seven days, without interrogation. We ate three times a day, but very little: spoonfuls of either potatoes or beans or rice or lentils. We were very hungry. We had a bucket for toilet, and there was a can with drinking and washing water in the cell. There was no light. There was a tiny opening in the ceiling for ventilation from the barracks, but it did not permit light to come through."

### **9. The "chicken coop"**

Until early 1988, a very small cell called the "chicken coop" (*al-qin*) by detainees was in Section I. This cell is no longer in use and may have been demolished. However, a similar cell is reportedly still used in Section III not for purposes of interrogation but to punish detainees considered to be "trouble makers".

The "chicken coop" in Section I was apparently 50 cm long, 50 cm wide and 70 cm high. A detainee, hooded and bound, would be pushed in it in a sitting position, with the head on the raised knees. The detainee would be kept in this cramped position for two or three hours, enough to cause severe back and neck pains. One detainee held between in 1987 and 1991 related his experience of the "chicken coop":

"After five days in isolation, and I was not talking, they put me in what is called the 'chicken coop' ... The first time I was in there for three hours. After three hours, you feel like you are about to explode ... They put me in the 'coop' three times, each time for about two or three hours."

### **10. The "collaborator's room"**

During interrogation, a detainee may be placed in a cell that already has one or two other occupants. These are believed to be informers, usually detainees who have been "turned" during interrogation and have agreed to cooperate with the interrogators by passing

information obtained from the newly arrived detainee. The "collaborators" would introduce themselves and claim to be members of an armed group, or of having actually participated in armed attacks against the IDF or the SLA, in an attempt to obtain the confidence of the detainee under interrogation. The following is the testimony of a detainee held between 1987 and 1991:

"After about 10 days, they put me in a cell with a 'collaborator'. At first I did not realize that he was a 'collaborator', but after a while it became clear. He had cigarettes and a lighter, while normally detainees only receive two cigarettes, lit by a guard. He told me that he had been in the resistance, but that he had 'good connections' (*wasta*) in the prison. He asked if I belonged to any particular party, and whether I had been involved in the resistance. At this point he got into a fight with the guy in the next cell who accused him of being a 'collaborator'. I told him I was a high school student and had not been involved. The next day, the collaborator told the interrogators that I belonged to the Communist Party. I was then taken back into interrogation and accused of being a communist. When I denied it, the torture got worse than it had been until then. If before they used electricity on me for an hour, now it would take two hours."

### **11. *Insults and threats***

Insults, especially of the detainee's religion or female relatives, are common. Threats, including death threats, are often directed at detainees or their relatives. "If you do not confess, we will bring your mother here and torture her in front of you." "If you do not confess, we will blow up your house." "If you do not confess, you will not get out of here alive." Some such threats appear to have been carried out, or refer to actions that detainees know have actually been carried out against others. The following is the testimony of a detainee held between 1985 and 1991:

"At one point, an Israeli interrogator said that he would blow up my house and bring in my fiancée if I did not tell him where the 'Katyushas' were. I found out shortly afterwards that they had in fact blown up the house. [Some days later] they took me by car to see my house which had been blown up. It was a civilian car. Then they took me straight back. They did not really say much, just, 'See what the result of your actions is', as a sort of psychological pressure. There had been 10 people living in that house, a two-storey house, owned by my father."

A woman detainee held between 1987 and 1988 described other threats and a mock

execution:

"During my interrogation the 'Lahdis' threatened to blow up my house and my entire family. They also said they would pull my clothes off. But nothing of this sort happened.

"After five days, they started using electricity. They put wires on my two index fingers, poured water over me, and shocked me. I screamed. Then they put a rope around my neck and threatened to kill me."

## **12. Torture of relatives**

To put additional pressure on detainees, one of their near relatives may be detained in Khiam for short or long periods and tortured or ill-treated within earshot of the detainees. This method of psychological torture appears to be highly effective. Detainees say that once they heard the anguished voice of their mother or father, for example, they could no longer resist their interrogators.

This is the testimony of a detainee taken prisoner at the end of 1986 and released in 1989. He said he had already been repeatedly and severely tortured when they brought in his mother:

"Then [the interrogator] told me, 'I brought your mother here.' And sure enough, she was in the next room. I heard her scream. She is 50 years old. They kept her for three months, I found out later, and they tortured her to put pressure on me. Eventually, when I heard her scream, I confessed to being a member of the [name of the group omitted]."

## **C. The interrogation of women**

Women detainees in the Khiam detention centre are reportedly interrogated and tortured by male interrogators, although they are kept separate from men detainees and are guarded by female guards. In general, the same interrogation methods used against men appear to be used against women, with the exception perhaps of the suspension from the electricity pole. However, women detainees have reportedly been subjected to threats of rape and forms of specific sexual abuse.

For example, women are said to have been partially undressed and beaten with an

electric cable on their bare buttocks during their interrogation. One such case reportedly occurred in May 1990. When electric shock torture has been used against women, the electrodes were reportedly often applied to the nipples. For some victims this appears to have led to severe emotional problems. Some women are said to have been medically examined in the presence of male guards. A woman held between in 1990 and 1991 related her experience as follows:

"Around 12.30 pm, two 'Lahdi' soldiers came to my home and asked me to come along to Khiam 'to have a word.' The 'Lahdis' did not say anything as we were driving. We were in a white Mercedes. When we arrived at the gate, there was an Israeli officer in a jeep, and the 'Lahdis' told him, 'We have got a present for you!' Once we arrived inside, a female guard put a sack and a blindfold over my head, and steel handcuffs on my hands. Then they took me to a room where my clothes were searched, and a nurse asked me if I had any medical problems. Then I was taken to an interrogation room. At first, only one man was there, a 'Lahdi.' He started asking me questions, and accused me of belonging to [name of the group omitted]. I denied this. Then he brought an electric cable and let me feel it, threatening that he would beat me with it. He also brought electric cables and let me feel those. At first I had been sitting on a chair, but now I was made to kneel on the floor with my arms raised. Then he started beating me with the cable, especially on my back and legs. I stayed in that room until 2 am and he would come and go. Around 2 am, a guard put me in a cell with three other women.

"The next day, at 8.30 am, I was taken into interrogation. A different interrogator was there, who asked me questions. He slapped and kicked me. This lasted for one and a half hours. Then he began threatening me with the electric cable, so I told him some things. At noon, I was returned to the cell for lunch. Then I was taken back to interrogation. The

interrogator put electric wires on my two little fingers and began to turn the crank. At first it was a weak pulse, but then it became stronger and stronger. This went on for 15 minutes, and then he left me. A guard put me back in my cell 'to think.' Around 8 pm I was taken back into interrogation. There was another man this time. First he was sweet-talking me, but then he changed his manner, and began cursing me and making sexual innuendos and threats. Then he beat me with his hands ...

"On about the 15th day, they applied electricity again on my two little fingers, and this time also on my left breast. After 30 days, they closed the file."

Another woman detainee, held between 1986 and 1987, related what happened after four days in detention and a morning interrogation session:

"'Y' came in the afternoon with several others. He took the sack off my head. He began very kindly, 'Why are you here?' and so on. Then he changed to insults and threats. He said many bad things, including sexual things. And he beat me. Then he left. A little later, four brutish men came into the room and began circling around me, all the while insulting me and slapping me, obviously to scare me. I did not say a thing. There were some threats. They said they would pull down my dress. One said, 'Give me a kiss!'. Later, one of them hit me on my left ear so that I could not hear through it all night.

"Eventually 'Y' came back in. He put the sack back over my head, and cuffs on my hands and feet, and took me outside. There he began asking me about weapons. It was evening. He cuffed me to a tree. There was a lot of mud there. The sack was very smelly. They kept beating me. 'Y' kept insisting that he wanted to know where the weapons were. Then he left me 'so that I could think it over.' It was very cold. I stayed there for maybe an hour. There were some other people, and they were making strange noises, like barking. I became nauseous because of the sack, and began to choke. 'Y' came back and said he would take off the sack if I agreed to talk. I refused, and he began beating me with a cable. Then I lost consciousness. They took me to a cell and took the sack off my head, but they continued to beat me. They hit me with the cable on my back and twice on my fingers. This was extremely painful. Later I heard cars leaving the compound. Then a guard called [name omitted] came in. He took my sack off and gave me a cigarette. Although I did not realize that at the time, my interrogation was over. It was night, and I slept."

#### **D. Injuries and deaths after torture**

Torture in Khiam is reported to have caused physical injury and, on a number of occasions, to have led or contributed to the death of detainees. Former detainees have complained of injuries including broken ribs and toes, hearing difficulties and back pains as a result of beatings; severe bruising and injuries to the feet and other parts of the body as a result of being hit with electric cables; urinary tract problems and internal injuries. One detainee held between 1986 and 1989 recalled:

"On the 11th day they took me out of my [isolation] cell around 5 am and brought me to an interrogation room. 'Y' was there. He asked me questions like, 'Who do you know in the resistance?', 'Who do you know in the political parties?', 'Which group do you belong to?'. I still was not answering his questions, so

they kept me almost continually under interrogation that day, until midnight. My body was all swollen from the beatings with the cable. At one point, an Israeli interrogator stamped on the back of my head with his boot as I was lying on the floor. Then he turned me over, and stamped on my mouth. Blood was coming out. He broke my nose that way, and I could not hear through my right ear for some time afterwards. I had to be operated on my nose and ear after my release."

Former detainees say that they hardly ever received medical attention during interrogation for injuries inflicted by torture. Much, however, appears to depend on the individual interrogator. One detainee reported telling his interrogator, after he had been kicked in the abdomen, that he had had an operation on his appendix, and that it was hurting. "Why did not you tell us?", the interrogator is said to have responded, referring presumably to the medical examination following arrival at Khiam. He then reportedly ended the interrogation for that day and made the detainee stand outside in the rain for the remainder of the evening. Those with serious complaints may be taken to the hospital in Marja'yun, where Israeli staff is said to be operating.

Former detainees recall a number of cases in which a fellow detainee died apparently after torture. Information on the precise circumstances of the deaths is not available to Amnesty International. However, in at least two cases, the victims are said to have been in good health prior to their detention and to have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated while in Khiam. One, 'Ali 'Abdullah Hamzah, a 36-year-old school teacher from the village of Jmaymah, died on or around 4 March 1986. Fellow detainees say that he had been in an isolation cell and kept screaming and proclaiming his innocence. A guard reportedly came and took him out of his cell, tied him by his neck to a pole in an outside yard and beat him. The victim was eventually taken to hospital but may have been already dead on arrival. The other case is that of Husayn 'Ali Mahmud, a man in his fifties from Hula. He was taken prisoner on 20 June 1987, apparently for refusing to collaborate with the Israeli forces. He was believed to be a member of the Lebanese Communist Party. His body was reportedly returned to his family in early July.

Two other men taken into custody by the SLA are reported to have died as a result of their treatment. 'Abdullah Ghamlush from Shaqra reportedly died after having been tortured in the SLA's "Centre 17" in Bint Jbail in May 1986. 'Abdullah Nadher from 'Arab Salim is said to have suffocated to death in the trunk of a car that was transporting him to Khiam, also in 1986. Another detainee, Zakaria Muhammad Nadher, is said to have died in custody in Khiam in June 1985. He apparently had marks around his neck, and some reports suggest he was strangled or executed by hanging.

## **IV. DAILY LIFE IN KHIAM**

Once the interrogation is over, detainees are placed in one of the cells used for long-term detention in Sections I to IV, or in the women's section. What begins then is a period of detention normally shared with other detainees, in conditions that former detainees say have improved over the years. However, it is still a period of tedious daily routine and almost total isolation from the outside world.

Perhaps most importantly, what detainees face is a period of complete uncertainty about their future until the moment of release. Detainees say that guards sometimes tell them for months in a row that they are about to be released. Other guards have reportedly indicated that the decision on release depended on Israel. In any case, detainees generally know that their fate is largely linked to the politics of the region and that this may mean months or years of detention in Khiam.

### **A. Life in a cell**

#### *Clothes and blankets*

When the detention centre was opened in 1985, detainees say they used to receive one set of blue prison clothes (a pair of trousers, a shirt and a woollen jacket), which they believe were left-overs from the Israeli-run Ansar detention camp. When families were allowed to visit the centre, they would bring additional clothes. Since 1988 detainees have received two sets of clothes. Initially detainees would also receive two or three blankets to be used as a mattress as well as cover. Since 1988 they have been given four blankets as well as a thin sponge mattress.

#### *Space inside a cell*

Many cells in the Khiam detention centre have been described as small, dark and dirty. Initially, overcrowding was a serious problem. One former detainee described his experience in mid-1985 as follows:

"Then [after having spent two months in isolation] they put me in a larger cell. There were four of us, and sometimes five or even six. We would sleep on our sides and on top of each other, taking turns. As a toilet, there was one bucket for five people. It would fill up really fast. I spent six months in this cell, before they transferred me to Section III because of overcrowding. Here there was a little more space."

Another detainee said he shared another cell of two by one and a half metres with three others, and that although they were given mattresses, these did not fit and had to be bent. The detainees would try to sleep lying in alternating feet/head positions. Overcrowding was apparently eased after the opening of Section IV at the end of 1987.

### *The lack of light*

The absence or scarcity of light in cells has been a main cause of hardship for detainees in Khiam. Cells in Section I and II are notorious for being particularly dark. One detainee taken prisoner in 1985 said he spent six months in a cell in Section I. He said it was so dark that "I could not see the colour in my cellmates' eyes." He then spent two years in cells in Section I and II. After that he said he had to be taken to Marja'yun hospital for eye tests since he had severe eye pains, and eventually had to undergo an eye operation. He was then moved to a cell in Section IV which was apparently larger and had light coming in through a small opening in the wall.

The search for better lighting is one of the main reasons for requests of transfers by detainees. One detainee, taken prisoner in early 1989, said he was held in two cells in Section II for a total of 12 months, then asked to be moved because of eye-sight problems. After five months of several transfers he eventually reached a cell in Section III, which he described as "being a little better because it has more light".

Another detainee, taken prisoner at the end of 1986, related his struggle to be moved from cell No. 5 of Section II (called "the grave" by detainees) after having spent 11 months there with four other detainees. He described what happened when he requested a transfer complaining of eye-sight problems:

"They took me to 'Y', hooded. He asked me to collaborate, in exchange for which he promised me a better cell, exercise in the 'sun room' whenever I would wish, access to cigarettes, an early release, a car, money and women. I refused, saying that I was not interested in those things. So he told me, 'you stay where you are.' They returned me to the same cell, and that same day I went on hunger-strike. I told them that I would not eat until they moved me. Then they took me to the yard and said, 'If you will not eat, you are going to eat beatings.' I refused, so they beat me a bit. Then they made me stand against a pole for about four hours, 'until you decide to eat.' At 4 pm 'Y' came to me and asked, 'Are you going to eat?' I told him 'no.' So they put me in another cell in Section II ... which is better than the others. I spent 10 months there. Then I was in cell [number omitted] of Section II for about six months. At this point I made another

hunger-strike for the same reason, requesting to be moved to Section III. After one day, they transferred me to cell [number omitted] in Section III". [The detainee spent the next seven months in Sections III and IV, until his release at the end of 1989].

#### *Killing time in a cell*

In their cells detainees say they are not allowed to have any objects except for their clothes, mattresses, blankets, towels and toiletries, as well as a bucket and water jug. To kill time, detainees tell each other stories, recite poetry or verses from the Qur'an, and play games with buttons or olive stones. Detainees say they memorize important dates of their detention experience, as well as dates important to the detention centre history in general. Some manage to obtain or manufacture needles and thread, which, along with olive stones, they use to make prayer beads (*masbahah*). Needles and prayer beads are said to be forbidden objects (although prayer is allowed). Their discovery may lead to confiscation and punishment. One detainee said that he was put in the cold outside and then placed in an isolation cell for 20 days after guards found a needle in his cell.

Since 1989 detainees have apparently been allowed to play cards in their cells and may receive one or two cigarettes a day. Talking, however, is said to be generally forbidden, except as a whisper. Violators of this rule may be taken out and beaten, or the whole section may suffer some form of collective punishment.

#### *Sanitation*

Men detainees apparently have no access to toilets in the detention centre. They must relieve themselves in a plastic bucket in their cell, which they often try to keep covered with towels. A jug of water in each cell is used for both drinking and washing.

In 1985 detainees were allowed to take a cold shower on average once a month, but this was irregular. They say that they would be given no more than one minute to shower, as guards would hurry them along. By 1987 detainees were apparently given five minutes to shower once every two weeks in the summer, and once a month in the winter. After an uprising within the detention centre in November 1989, detainees were reportedly allowed to shower every 10 days. However, since 1990 the practice has apparently reverted to showering once a fortnight in the summer and once a month in winter.

### *Food*

The years 1985 to 1988 are remembered by former detainees as years of hunger. Each detainee would receive two pieces of toast three times a day; some jam, a few olives or a boiled egg for breakfast; and a few spoonfuls of rice, pasta or potatoes with beans or other vegetables for lunch and dinner. Sometimes five people in a cell reportedly shared a single plate of rice and beans, or a single egg. One detainee summed up the situation by commenting: "You do not think about freedom; you think about your next meal."

In 1988 food reportedly improved in quantity and quality. Typically, detainees would have half a loaf of local bread along with some cheese and a spoonful of yoghurt or beans (*foul*) for breakfast; a plate each of potatoes or rice or pasta with some vegetables and fruit for lunch; *hummus* (a paste of chickpeas), some sardines, canned tuna or meat, and beans for dinner. On Fridays, the lunch menu would include *mujaddarah*, a popular dish of lentils, rice and fried onion. Since 1991, former detainees say they have received chicken for lunch on Wednesdays.

### *Exercise: the "sun room"*

Opportunities for exercise were initially extremely limited. In 1985 detainees would be taken from their cells once every two months to walk around for about five minutes in a yard which they call the "sun room" (*ghurfat lil-shams*). There are two such yards for men detainees. They are small walled-in areas, with a barbed wire mesh for roof, built next to Sections II and IV for men detainees. It appears that detainees are today allowed in the yard every few days for periods ranging from 15 to 30 minutes. Usually, detainees are taken in small groups to the yard where they may perform simple gymnastics but are forbidden to speak.

### *Conditions for women detainees*

Conditions of detention for women are described as somewhat better than those for men. Initially, overcrowding was also a problem, as up to eight or nine women would sometimes share a cell of about three by three metres. The situation later improved, especially after additional cells were built in 1990.

Each woman has four blankets and a mattress. Cells in the women's section have a light bulb; lights are turned off at 9 pm. Talking is permitted inside the cells only. Detainees do, however, talk with their neighbours through their cell doors or the small window in the back of their cells. Sometimes they sing in low voices between the cells. Within the cells they may play with cards or olive stones.

Women detainees have the same diet as men detainees, but apparently have better access to toilets and showers. Women are reportedly taken to bathrooms in the morning at 6 am, each cell taking its turn. They then clean their own cells and refill the water jug. At night, they are again taken to the bathrooms. They may take adequate showers every other day, and get some exercise in their own "sun room" or in the corridor of the women's section every day or every other day.

### *Work assignments*

Detainees may perform a number of tasks in the detention centre. This is usually seen as a favour rather than a hardship. There are three areas of assignment: the "internal assignment" (*al-kilfah al-dakhiliyyah*), which includes food distribution and cleaning within individual sections; the "external assignment" (*al-kilfah al-khariyyah*), which includes garbage collection, cleaning and small repairs throughout the detention centre; and the "kitchen assignment" (*kilfat al-matbakh*), which entails food preparation.

Women as well as men perform these tasks. Detainees on the "internal assignment" say they have tried to help other detainees, for example by providing extra food or smuggling needles and other objects. However, if discovered they risk losing their job and being punished. Many "collaborators" are believed to be given priority in obtaining a work assignment.

## **B. Guards and "collaborators"**

Detainees say that some guards have been friendly, especially if they came from the same village, while others have been described as seeking to make detainees' lives as miserable as possible. Detainees have complained, for example, that guards and other staff stole supplies, especially food and clothes. Food is apparently brought in every day from Marja'yun and then prepared in the main kitchen for distribution to inmates and guards alike. Detainees say that for a while one SLA officer used to sell the best items, like canned meat and fish, to merchants in the village of Khiam, while buying staple foods, like lentils, rice and beans, for the detainees. This apparently ended in 1990.

A source of fear or disquiet for detainees is the presence among them of real or suspected "collaborators". These include detainees who try to help interrogators by finding out information relating to events outside Khiam or plans for actions within the centre such as protest strikes. In exchange, "collaborators" enjoy favours and a greater margin of freedom. For example, they reportedly can move around more often, are chosen for the work assignments, take showers and have exercise daily, and are allowed cigarettes in greater numbers. One detainee held between 1989 and 1991 reported:

"I worked for three months, except for two days, in the internal *kilfah*, distributing food to the cells. There were four 'collaborators' doing this work, one who was suspected of being a 'collaborator', and myself. I was working on behalf of the prisoners, that is, bringing them water, making sure clothes got washed, etc., while the 'collaborators' were doing just the opposite. I had to be very careful. I lost the job when one of the 'collaborators' saw me pass something to my friends."

"Collaborators" are usually known to detainees, who avoid contact with them as much as possible. Sometimes "collaborators" are attacked by other detainees. In the spring of 1989, for example, several detainees reportedly tried to kill a suspected collaborator in Section III. The attempt failed and the assailants were beaten by guards and put in isolation cells. Shortly after this attempt, some 30 detainees reportedly attacked another suspected "collaborator" who was considered to be particularly mean. He was apparently hospitalized for three days.

### **C. Medical care**

In addition to the injuries sustained under torture, medical complaints from detainees include most commonly skin conditions, like rashes, often caused by insufficient hygiene. Other common complaints have been, lice infestation, eye-sight problems, mouth infections, stress-related ulcers and food poisoning.

There seem to be two or three nurses in the detention centre at any one time. The quality of their care is said to be poor, often consisting of the administration of pain-killers for detainees suffering, for example, from ulcers. According to detainees, nurses may respond slowly when called to the cells for a medical complaint, or not respond at all, claiming for example that detainees are faking an illness. A woman detainee taken prisoner in 1989 was reportedly put in an isolation cell for eight days, and later again for 19 days, because she complained of a skin condition. She apparently did not receive treatment.

A physician is said to visit the centre once a week. During 1987 a doctor from Jezzine reportedly came every Thursday. Since 1989 a doctor from Qlay'ah is said to visit every Tuesday. Detainees say that only a small number of patients are referred to the doctor by the nurses. Some are subsequently referred to a hospital in Marja'yun for tests or an operation. In the hospital, the detainee may remain handcuffed and blindfolded for the duration of the tests or treatment.

Negligent medical care, in addition to the overall conditions of detention and

treatment of detainees, may have been a factor in the death of five men detained in Khiam. They include Bilal al-Salman and Ibrahim Abu 'Az, who both died reportedly after having been exposed to smoke from a smoke-grenade and tear-gas while in their cells during a protest by detainees in November 1989. In the case of Bilal al-Salman detainees report that cellmates called for medical assistance when they saw him breathing with great difficulty, but no one came to help.

Other detainees whose deaths could be ascribed at least in part to the conditions in Khiam and poor medical care include Labib Fares Abu Raida, from Hasbayya, who was said to be very ill during his detention and died one month after his release in 1986. Ahmad Turmus, a man in his mid-sixties from the village of Tallusah, reportedly died of a heart attack in November 1987 after taking one of the rare cold showers allowed at the time and then being exposed to a cold current in his cell. As'ad Bizzi, from Bint Jbail, reportedly died in August 1990 without having received adequate treatment for cancer.

Some men and women currently detained in Khiam are believed to be in poor health. They include 'Ali Barakat and 'Ali Mahdi 'Ayyub, said to have acute ulcers; and Najah 'Alayq, said to be affected by a skin condition. Others reported to be suffering from physical or emotional ailments are Haytham Dabaja, Naser Kharfan, Hasan 'Alawiyyah, Kamel 'Isa Zhur, 'Ali Shu'aybah, Farida Rislán and Zaynab al-Haj.

## **D. Detainees' protest strikes**

### *Protest strikes before November 1989*

Detainees in the Khiam detention centre have been on hunger-strike several times in an attempt to obtain improvements in their conditions of detention. Former detainees say that some of their demands were met in the aftermath of a strike, but the situation often returned to what it was before the protest. In the long term, however, the overall conditions of detention have improved.

In April 1987 detainees in Section III refused to accept food for three consecutive meals, demanding a better diet. Detainees say that food improved for a few weeks. Another hunger-strike took place in November 1987 and lasted three days. On that occasion some 120 detainees reportedly went on strike the day after the death of Ahmad Turmus. Their demands included improvements in food and medical care, more frequent showers and access to the exercise yard, and regular visits by the ICRC. After a failed attempt at force-feeding, detainees on strike were reportedly taken to the exercise yard, beaten and doused with water while other detainees shouted and banged at the doors in protest at the beating. Some of the detainees' demands, such as those relating to showers and access to the yard, were eventually accepted, although apparently only for a few weeks.

Three short hunger-strikes were reported in 1988, in February, May and December. The strike in May was carried out in different sections, despite the difficulty of communicating between sections. It reportedly led to the provision of additional blankets and clothes, and mattresses to detainees who had not yet received them.

Sometimes attempts at organizing a strike were discovered and thwarted, reportedly leading to punishments including beatings and solitary confinement. In the words of one detainee, detained in Section II in the summer of 1989:

"At one point during this period we were talking with detainees in the neighbouring cell about how to get our rights. The guards heard us and, in the evening, the interrogators came. They took all the detainees out of five cells and into the yard, blindfolded us, and beat and kicked us for two hours while we were lying on the ground. They accused us of planning a strike, and they threatened us that we would get more beatings if we continued in this way."

#### *The intifada of November 1989: two deaths*

Tension within Khiam was high during the first weeks of November 1989. At the beginning of the month there was a two-day hunger-strike in Section III. Detainees demands included permission to receive newspapers and have sewing needles in their cells. These demands were not accepted. On or about 20 November a detainee was reportedly beaten by a guard in unclear circumstances in Section III. Two days later two guards in the same section reportedly forbade five detainees in cell No. 7 to pray and then beat them severely with sticks when they refused to comply. Three of them, Rafiq Dabaja, Ahmad Yahya and Jihad Hammud, are said to have been taken to hospital as a result.

According to the accounts of former detainees, on the morning of 25 November 1989 detainees in cell No. 13 in Section III were accused by guards of raising their voice and laughing. One such detainee, 18-year-old Amin Turmus, was taken out of his cell and beaten in the corridor by the head of the guard unit. The same treatment was meted out to Muhammad Hazimah, despite his attempts to resist being dragged out of his cell and the protest of the other detainees. Detainees in the section then refused to have lunch and asked to speak to Israeli officers. In response, guards went to cell No. 20, took 'Adnan Ibrahim into the corridor and beat him. The other detainees started to bang on their doors and shout "Take all of us out" and "*allahu akbar*" (God is the greatest). The guards fired into the air inside the section and left. The prison commander tried to negotiate with the detainees, but they persisted with their demand to speak to Israeli officers.

As the stand-off continued, SLA and IDF soldiers are said to have taken up positions in and around Section III. A smoke-bomb was thrown into the section, but the smoke, which

was red, failed to spread. Following a second failed attempt to negotiate by the prison commander, another smoke-bomb was thrown into the section, this one producing black smoke. As detainees began to suffocate, guards allowed those most affected to go to the yard for 15 minutes. Two detainees, 'Imad 'Awada and 'Ali Fuqani, appeared to be in a bad state. That night about 10 detainees, pointed out by "collaborators" in the section, were taken out into the yard, beaten and kept there. On the morning of 26 November detainees accepted to end their strike in exchange for the return of those detainees who had been taken to the yard. However, the protest had already spread to other sections.

In the afternoon of November 25, detainees in Section IV were alerted by the commotion coming from Section III and the sight by some of them of armed soldiers around the section. When they realized that a protest had started they began to bang on their doors. After the prison commander failed to calm things down, a smoke-bomb was thrown into the section and landed near the door of cell No. 15. Two of the inmates there were Bilal al-Salman from Markaba and Ibrahim Abu-'Az from Bint Jbail. The next morning, 26 November, about 15 detainees were taken to the yard and beaten. In the afternoon, these 15 detainees were moved to Section II, including Bilal al-Salman and Ibrahim Abu-'Az who were placed in cell No. 4 and No. 17 respectively.

That evening Bilal al-Salman began to experience difficulty in breathing, apparently in a delayed reaction to the smoke inhalation of the previous day, as well as the beatings sustained in the yard. His cellmates called for help but guards came with delay and then insulted the detainees rather than seeking medical help. Bilal al-Salman stopped coughing in the early hours of the morning, and his cellmates thought he had finally managed to go to sleep. In the morning of 27 November they discovered, however, that he had stopped breathing. They called for the nurse, but by then Bilal al-Salman was dead.

As the news of Bilal al-Salman's death spread in Section II, detainees began shouting and banging their doors. Guards threw a tear-gas canister into the corridor of the section. Shortly after they had to break windows in order to let the gas out. The cells were eventually opened and the detainees allowed to go to the yard. It was too late for Ibrahim Abu-'Az: he died shortly after, either in the corridor of Section II or on the

way to hospital. Three other detainees, Muhammad al-Masri, Hasan 'Assayli, and Husayn Sa'ad, were also taken to hospital in Marja'yun and kept there for several hours. The hospital was apparently guarded by IDF soldiers who kept away families who had heard rumours of the protest. Detainees from Section II spent the night in the yard, as their cells were too contaminated by the tear-gas.

Women detainees joined the protest in the evening of 25 November, after hearing men being beaten. Although they had no precise information about what was going on elsewhere

in the detention centre, they started banging on their cell doors and singing nationalist songs. Guards came and beat one woman from each cell, while the prison director threatened further punishment. The women found out two months later from one of their cellmates who was hospitalized in Marja'yun that two detainees had died.

It appears that an investigation was carried out into the circumstances of the November 1989 *intifada*. Detainees say that an Israeli senior officer questioned SLA staff -- but not detainees -- and that two guards were dismissed after several weeks. A panel of SLA officers questioned those detainees who had been taken to Marja'yun hospital during the protest. In December 1989 Amnesty International wrote to General Lahad asking for the results of the investigation but received no response.

At least two other strikes have taken place since. In mid-April 1991 detainees reportedly went on a short hunger-strike to demand better food and improvements in the health situation. In August 1991 a one-day strike is said to have taken place over cigarette allotment.

## **E. Lack of access to the outside world**

### **1. Communications with relatives**

Family visits in the Khiam detention centre initially took place on average once a month for about five minutes. However, in the spring of 1988 they were suspended, for reasons unknown to Amnesty International. Former detainees believe it may be a way to create additional pressure for obtaining a prisoner's exchange. Since 1988 only rare visits arranged as a special favour or through a bribe appear to have taken place.

Families could meet detainees in the interrogation rooms until special rooms were constructed for this purpose in 1987. In these rooms detainees could meet their relatives separated by a metal screen. After the suspension of visits, relatives have still been allowed to bring clothes, towels and toiletries which are delivered through the guards.

Detainees are said not to be normally permitted to send or receive mail. One exception was that of Suha Beshara, who in March 1990 was reportedly permitted to send letters to her family and the Secretary General of the Lebanese Communist Party. Her family is said to believe that the exception was made to remind the world that there were detainees in Khiam who might be included in a possible prisoner exchange deal. Amnesty International does not know the content of these letters.

The remaining form of communication with relatives are oral messages transmitted

through the guards (often guards from the same village as the detainees), or messages broadcast by families on the popular radio program "*min nahnu bi khayr*" that are relayed to detainees by friendly guards. New and former detainees are of course a main source of news for the other detainees and their families.

## **2. The International Committee of the Red Cross**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has never been allowed access to detainees in the Khiam detention centre. Repeated requests by the ICRC to the SLA and Israel to obtain access to the centre have led nowhere.

Both the SLA and Israel have indicated that ICRC access to Khiam was conditional to the ICRC being granted access to SLA members and Israeli soldiers believed to be held in Lebanon by other armed groups. General Lahad has been quoted by press reports on several occasions saying that no ICRC visits would be permitted until the ICRC was allowed to visit SLA members, today numbering eight, who may be held by other groups in Lebanon. In January 1987 Uri Lubrani, the Israeli Government's coordinator of activities in Lebanon, told Amnesty International that although Israel had discussed with the SLA the issue of ICRC access to the Khiam detention centre, he did not see why such access should be granted by the SLA when SLA members held by other groups in Lebanon had no such access.

The ICRC maintains that detainees held in Khiam are protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and as such should be allowed at the very least access to ICRC delegates without conditions of reciprocity or other conditions.

For a short period in 1986 and between November 1987 and February 1988 the ICRC was permitted to arrange transportation to Khiam for detainees' families living outside the "enclave". Since then the ICRC's role has been limited to occasionally receiving released detainees and taking them to other destinations in Lebanon.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Amnesty International's conclusions*

Many men and women held in Khiam since 1985 have been tortured or ill-treated during interrogation. Some 200 of them are currently detained. They are cut off from the outside world since family visits were suspended in 1988. ICRC visits have never been allowed. Detainees in Khiam also appear to be held outside any legal framework and their legal status remains unclear.

Although the Khiam detention centre is staffed by the SLA, the available evidence indicates that Israeli officials have been directly involved in the affairs of the detention centre, including by participating in interrogation and torture, at least until 1988. Although Israel's direct involvement in Khiam has clearly diminished since then, Israeli officials are still reported to visit the centre and to be involved in its supervision. Detainees are reported to have sometimes been taken from Khiam for interrogation by Israeli officials in other places in south Lebanon or in Israel, or to have undergone such interrogation immediately before being taken to Khiam. Both Israeli and SLA officials have repeatedly offered the release of the detainees held in Khiam, among others, in exchange for the release of IDF and SLA members missing in Lebanon, or for information about them. Detainees have been released from Khiam in that context. On this basis, Amnesty International believes that the responsibility for the treatment and fate of the detainees in Khiam lies with both Israel and the SLA.

Amnesty International takes no position on the political and military conflict taking place in south Lebanon, or on any prisoner exchange that may be negotiated in the region or elsewhere. It is aware that detainees in Khiam may have been involved in violence against Israel and the SLA. It is also aware that IDF and SLA members are still missing in Lebanon. It believes that their fate should be clarified, and that if they are held as hostages they should be released immediately and unconditionally. However, whatever the actions of the detainees held in Khiam, and whatever the situation of the missing IDF and SLA members, this can in no way justify the abuse of the human rights of the detainees held in Khiam.

### *Amnesty International's recommendations*

Amnesty International is urging the Israeli Government and the SLA to ensure that the rights of the men and women held in Khiam are fully respected. As a minimum, Amnesty International specifically recommends:

**End all forms of torture and ill-treatment**

Urgent measures should be taken to end all forms of torture and ill-treatment. These measures should include clear instructions to all those involved in the interrogation and custody of the detainees that such treatment is prohibited in all circumstances and that abuses will be punished. Torture and all other forms of ill-treatment are absolutely prohibited by international law under any circumstances.

**Allow visits by the ICRC**

Detainees should be given regular access to a humanitarian organization such as the ICRC without delay and without conditions. Such access would constitute an important safeguard against torture and ill-treatment.

**Allow access to families and medical attention**

Detainees should also be allowed regular access to their families and to independent medical attention, as a further safeguard of their physical and mental well-being.

**Clarify the legal situation of the detainees**

The Israeli authorities should clarify the legal situation of these detainees, especially as they have offered to release them in exchange for the release or information about four Israeli soldiers still missing in Lebanon. No one should be held as a hostage: anyone held exclusively in order to compel others to release detainees or provide information about missing persons should be released immediately and unconditionally.