

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: MDE 18/011/2005 (Public)
News Service No: 340
12 December 2005

Lebanon: Killing of Gibran Tueni

Amnesty International condemned the killing this morning of journalist and MP Gibran Tueni in a car bomb explosion in Beirut's Mkalles suburb. His driver, Nicolas Flouti, and two others were also killed in the blast and 10 passers-by were injured.

Gibran Tueni, 48, was managing editor of *an-Nahar* newspaper and an outspoken critic of Syria's activities in Lebanon. He accused the Damascus authorities of responsibility for the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in February and stated in August that he had received "accurate" information that his own name was on an assassination hit-list. He was elected as a member of parliament in national elections held in May.

On 6 December, Gibran Tueni called publicly for Lebanese President Emile Lahoud to be questioned about a mass grave recently discovered at the Ministry of Defence in al-Yarze on the grounds that Lahoud was Lebanon's military commander in 1990, the date when the bodies were apparently buried there. He also called for an inquiry into the al-Yarze mass grave and another recently uncovered at 'Anjar to be carried out jointly by Lebanese and international experts.

Amnesty International calls upon the Lebanese authorities to investigate the killing of Gibran Tueni and bring the perpetrators to justice in line with international standards. It also urges all political groups to respect freedom of expression in the country and to refrain from acts of violence against civilians.

The explosion that killed Gibran Tueni is at least the thirteenth to have occurred, and the third targeting a journalist, since the bomb that killed former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and more than 20 others on 14 February. On 2 June, *an-Nahar* journalist Samir Qasir was killed in a car bomb explosion in Beirut, and on 25 September May Chidiac was seriously injured in a car bomb explosion on the outskirts of Beirut.

See Amnesty International, Public Statement, *Lebanon: Mass Graves - Exhumations must be in line with international standards, and perpetrators brought to justice* (MDE 18/009/2005) , 5 December 2005