

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Deportation/
Fear for safety

21 December 1992

ISRAEL/SOUTH LEBANON: Over 400 Palestinians

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the situation of over 400 Palestinian deportees currently stranded in an area between the "security zone", controlled by Israel with its allied militia the South Lebanon Army (SLA), and the rest of Lebanon. Most of the deportees are suspected by the Israeli authorities of being members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) which claimed responsibility for the killing of an Israeli Border Policeman last week.

The deportees are reported to have tried this morning to enter the "security zone" on their way back to Israel but to have stopped when the SLA opened fire in their direction. Amjad Zamel, one of the deportees, was wounded and is said to have been taken to hospital in territory under Lebanese army control. The Israeli authorities have stated they do not intend to allow them back, although the Israeli High Court of Justice is currently examining a petition to allow the deportees back. The Lebanese authorities have stated they do not intend to allow the deportees into the territory under their control.

Amnesty International is reiterating its call to the Israeli authorities to allow the Palestinian deportees to return safely to Israel. If any are suspected of committing an offence, they should be charged and given a prompt and fair trial, or be released.

Amnesty International is also calling on Israel and the SLA to ensure that the Palestinian deportees are not harmed and are allowed safe passage through the "security zone" into Israel. At the same time, the deportees should be given protection by the Lebanese authorities if they seek it.

Amnesty International has condemned the killing of Sergeant-Major Nissim Toledano, the Israeli Border Policeman taken hostage in Israel and then killed by Hamas. It had called on Hamas not to ill-treat him or execute him and to release him as he was held as a hostage. It had also called on the Israeli authorities not to retaliate against the killing of Nissim Toledano by summarily deporting hundreds of Palestinians.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- calling on the Israeli authorities to ensure that the Palestinian deportees are allowed to return safely to Israel;

- calling on the Israeli authorities and the South lebanon Army not to harm the deportees and to allow them safe passage back to Israel;

- stressing that Amnesty International condemns the killing of the Israeli Border Policeman but urging the Israeli authorities not to commit human rights violations in response to such abuses.

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APPEALS TO

1) Mr Yitzhak Rabin
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Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
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State of Israel
Telegrams: Prime Minister Rabin, Jerusalem, Israel
Telexes: 25279 mpres il
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Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

2) Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak
Chief of Staff
C/o Ministry of Defence
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Hakirya
TEL AVIV 67659
State of Israel
Telegrams: Chief of Staff Barak, Tel Aviv, Israel
Telexes: 371434 mod il
Faxes: + 972 3 217915

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General Barak

3) Major-General Yitzhak Mordechai
Military Commander for the Northern Command
c/o Ministry of Defence
7 "A" Street
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Tel Aviv 64734
State of Israel
Telegrams: Major-General Mordechai, Ministry of Defence, Tel Aviv, Israel
Telexes: 371434 mod il
Faxes: + 972 3 217915

Salutation: Dear Major-General Mordechai

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Judge Yosef Harish

Attorney General
PO Box 1087
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State of Israel
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and to diplomatic representatives of Israel and Occupied Territories accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 January 1993.