

EXTERNAL

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Middle East
Date: 31 December 1992

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

More than 400 Palestinians Israel/south Lebanon

Keywords

Theme: deportation / deprivation of medical care

Profession/association: doctors

Summary

Amnesty International is concerned at the harsh conditions experienced by more than 400 Palestinians from the Occupied Territories deported into a "no man's land" between the "security zone" controlled by Israel and its allied militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), and the rest of Lebanon. The deportees are living in tents, in freezing conditions and without access to adequate food and water supplies, nor proper medical care. Amnesty International is urging that the Israeli authorities readmit the deported Palestinians. It is also appealing to the Lebanese authorities to permit the entry of those deportees who wish to seek medical care in Lebanon.

Recommended Actions

Letters from medical professionals, preferably written in English or otherwise your own language, should be sent to the addresses below:

To the ISRAELI authorities

- expressing concern at the current situation of more than 400 Palestinians deported from the Occupied Territories and living in harsh, cold conditions in "no man's land" in south Lebanon without access to adequate water supplies, food or medical care
- urging the Israeli authorities to allow the safe return of the deportees to Israel. If any are suspected of committing a recognizably criminal offence, they should be charged and given a prompt and fair trial, or be released.
- seeking assurances that, meanwhile, the delivery of essential humanitarian supplies, including food and medicines, to the deportees will be permitted

Addresses: Israel

Mr Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Jerusalem 91919
State of Israel Faxes: + 972 2 664 838
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak
Chief of Staff
C/o Ministry of Defence
7 "A" Street
Hakiryia
Tel Aviv 67659
State of Israel Faxes: + 972 3 217915
Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General Barak

Major-General Yitzhak Mordechai
Military Commander for the Northern Command
c/o Ministry of Defence
7 "A" Street
Hakiryia
Tel Aviv 64734
State of Israel Faxes: + 972 3 217915
Salutation: Dear Major-General Mordechai

Please send copies of your appeals to:

Judge Yosef Harish
Attorney General
PO Box 1087
Jerusalem
State of Israel Faxes: + 972 2 869473

Israeli Medical Association
39 Shaul Hamelech Boulevard
Tel Aviv 6498
State of Israel

Please also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

Separate letters should be sent to the LEBANESE authorities

- expressing concern at the plight of the Palestinians currently forced to remain in tents in "no man's land" between the "security zone" controlled by Israel and the SLA, and the rest of Lebanon
- urging that, until the Israeli authorities can be persuaded to readmit the Palestinians, the Lebanese authorities permit, for humanitarian reasons, the delivery of essential

humanitarian supplies to the deportees and that any of the Palestinians seeking medical care in Lebanon be permitted entry for this purpose

Addresses: Lebanon

Letters to the Lebanese authorities should be written in Arabic, French, English or your own language.

President Elias Hrawi
Presidential Palace
Ba'abda
Beirut
Lebanon Telex: 21000
Salutation: Dear President Hrawi

Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri
Office of the Prime Minister
Serail
Rue des Arts et Métiers
Sarayah, Beirut
Lebanon
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Fares Buwayz
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rue Sursouk
Achrafieh, Beirut
Lebanon Telex: 20726 AFFAIR or 20440 AFFAIR
Salutation: Dear Mr Buwayz

Mohsen Daloul
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Yarzeh
Beirut
Lebanon Telex: 20901 ARMLIB
Salutation: Dear Mr Daloul

Please send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

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MEDICAL CONCERN

**More than 400 Palestinians
Israel/south Lebanon**

More than 400 Palestinians from the Occupied Territories (reportedly including ten doctors), deported from Israel on 17 December 1992, are currently living in harsh conditions in "no man's land" between the "security zone" controlled by Israel and its allied militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), and the rest of Lebanon. There are now serious fears for the health of several of the Palestinians, either as a result of injuries caused by shelling when they tried to re-enter the "security zone" on 21 December, or from the constant risk faced by the deportees in the light of the freezing conditions and lack of food, clean water and medical supplies. Amnesty International is calling on the Israeli authorities to allow the deportees to return immediately and safely. If any are suspected of committing a recognizably criminal offence, they should be charged and given a prompt and fair trial, or be released. Amnesty International is also urging the Lebanese authorities to admit those Palestinians who wish to seek medical treatment in Lebanon.

Background

On 13 December 1992, Sergeant-Major Nissim Toledano, an Israeli Border Policeman, was taken hostage and later killed by members of Hamas, an Islamic Palestinian group. In response, the Israeli authorities arrested and deported more than 400 Palestinians, most of whom they suspect of being members of Hamas, to an area in south Lebanon between Israel's "security zone" and the rest of Lebanon. On 21 December 1992, three of the deportees were injured by SLA or Israeli fire when they tried to re-enter the "security zone".

Lebanon initially allowed humanitarian aid to be provided to the detainees, as well as allowing wounded or ill deportees to be brought to government-controlled hospitals for treatment. Since then, Lebanon has refused to accept responsibility for the welfare of the Palestinians. On 21 December 1992, the Lebanese authorities banned relief organizations from providing further humanitarian aid to the deportees via Lebanese territory. On 25 December, eight hospitalized deportees were sent back to the temporary camp occupied by the Palestinians, and another four ill Palestinians were refused permission to be brought to government-controlled hospitals for treatment.

Both Israel and Lebanon continue to refuse permission for relief supplies to be delivered to the deportees through territory they control. The International Committee of the Red Cross has criticised both states for this refusal. The only treatment available to the men is that provided by doctors among the deportees. Among those reported to be ill are Amjad Zamel, wounded in the chin by a shell during the abortive attempt to enter the "security zone", and Zuhayr Labbadah, aged 31, who suffers from a kidney infection. Another of those injured during the shelling reportedly heard on the radio of the death of his father as a result of a heart attack. On 29 December 1992, Dr Omar Farwana, the deported doctor who is managing the health of the

deportees, was quoted by Reuters as expressing serious concern for the health of three of the deportees. "They need to be transferred immediately to hospital - wherever it is," he said. Two days later, he expressed particular concern about Zuhayr Labbadah. "This is a medical issue, not a political issue. I believe he is losing his life here," he was quoted as saying.

Amnesty International is appealing again to the Israeli authorities to allow safe passage to the Palestinians back into Israel. If any are suspected of committing a recognizably criminal offence, they should be charged and given a prompt and fair trial, or be released. The organization is also urging the Lebanese authorities to permit those who need medical care to enter Lebanese hospitals if they request treatment.