

16 August 2002

Further information on UA 171/02 (MDE 18/008/2002, 11 June 2002) - Fear of torture/Unfair trial

LEBANON Ahmad Abu Ghosh (m)

Fadi Taybah (m)

Masjad Ghayth (m) - new name

'Ali al-Hamawi (m) - new name

Said Minawi (m)

Mumtaz Minawi (m)

Azzam Amer (m)

Muhammad Khaled (m)

Abd al-Munim Zarur (m)

Umar al-Rifai (m)

Ahmad al-Darj (m)

and at least eleven others

Wissam al-'Umar (m) - released on bail

Amnesty International fears that Ahmad Abu Ghosh, Masjad Ghayth, 'Ali al-Hamawi and Fadi Taybah may now be at great risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Ahmad Abu Ghosh, Masjad Ghayth, 'Ali al-Hamawi and Fadi Taybah, who were released on bail in June, were re-arrested on 13 August in connection with a bombing which resulted in the killing of the mother-in-law and the injury of the daughter of George al-Aquri, a police officer at Rumieh prison in Beirut. The four men may be at risk of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, as they are held in incommunicado detention at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre in al-Yarze, where certain categories of detainees are routinely tortured and ill-treated as punishment or as a means of extracting confessions.

Following the bombing five other members of the group of people detained in connection with the Dhinniyya clashes were reportedly moved from Rumieh prison to Ba'abda for investigation. It is feared that they may also be at risk of torture.

In June the Justice Council released Fadi Taybah, Ahmed Abu Ghosh, 'Ali al-Hamawi, Masjad Ghayth, Wissam al-'Umar and at least three other men on bail. Each man paid five million Lebanese pounds (US\$ 3400) bail. Another 18 detainees were denied bail, including Said Minawi, Mumtaz Minawi, Azzam Amer, Muhammad Khaled, Abd al-Munim Zarur, Umar al-Rifai and Ahmad al-Darj. The bail offer followed a hunger strike by at least 19 members of the group who protested against their torture and ill-treatment as well as the unfairness of their trial before the Justice Council. Following the bail offer all detainees ended their hunger strike.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Lebanon, political and criminal detainees are frequently tortured or ill-treated. This especially appears to be the case at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre.

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

The Lebanese authorities have failed to investigate past allegations of torture, and to bring perpetrators to justice. Confessions extracted under duress have often been used as the main evidence in trials of political detainees.

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

- seeking assurances that Ahmad Abu Ghosh, Masjad Ghayth, 'Ali al-Hamawi, Fadi Taybah and at least 18 other detainees are not being subjected to torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- urging that they be allowed immediate access to their lawyer, families and any medical care they may need;
- expressing concern at the previous allegations of torture by the men named above and other detainees held in connection with the Dhinniyya clashes;
- calling for all such allegations to be investigated promptly, impartially and independently, and for those responsible to be brought to justice in fair trials;
- urging that the men named above and all the other detainees held in connection with the Dhinniyya clashes (including those released on bail) are given a prompt and fair trial in accordance with international standards for fair trial;
- reminding the Lebanese authorities that any confessions extracted under duress shall not be used as evidence in any proceedings against them according to the provisions of the Convention Against Torture to which Lebanon is a state party.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency President Emile Lahoud  
Office of the President  
Ba'abda Palace  
Ba'abda, Beirut  
Lebanon

**Telegram: President Lahoud, Beirut, Lebanon**

**Fax: + 961 1 425 393**

**Telex: 21000**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Samir Jisr  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Rue Sami Solh  
Beirut  
Lebanon

**Telegram: Justice Minister, Beirut, Lebanon**

**Fax: + 961 1 611 142**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Judge 'Adnan 'Addoum  
Prosecutor General  
Palace of Justice  
Beirut  
Lebanon

**Fax: + 961 1 427 819 (if someone answers ask for the fax tone)**

**Salutation: Dear Judge 'Adnan 'Addoum**

and to diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 September 2002.