

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 18/015/2001

UA 233/01

Fear of torture/Incommunicado detention/Legal concern

13 September 2001

LEBANONFadi al-Shamati, businessman
Sa'ud Bu-Shibl, businessman
Milad 'Assaf, builder
Dani Gea'gea'

The four men named above, all members the outlawed Lebanese Forces party (LF), were arrested by the Lebanese Military Intelligence in the capital, Beirut, between 7 and 11 September. They are now reported to be held incommunicado at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre in Yarze, Beirut, where political detainees are routinely tortured to force them to confess.

Fadi al-Shammati has been arrested several times during the last five years on grounds of his political activities on behalf of the LF.

They were apparently arrested because of their alleged involvement in the distribution of political literature and the holding of unauthorized political meetings. No formal charges have yet been brought against them, and they have not been allowed to see their lawyers and families. While they are held incommunicado they are at especial risk of torture and ill-treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These arrests come one month after scores of LF activists were arrested for political reasons and later brought before the Military Court on charges of involvement in unauthorised political activities and collaboration with Israel. Most of them have since been released.

The LF was outlawed by the Lebanese government in 1994. LF members are routinely arrested, often as they engage in legitimate political activities critical of the authorities. They are detained incommunicado, sometimes for weeks on end, which puts them at greater risk of torture and ill-treatment. LF member Fawzi al-Rasi died in custody at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre in 1994, reportedly as a result of torture. The Lebanese authorities have failed to investigate 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic, French or your own language:

- calling for the release of Fadi al-Shamati, Sa'ud Bu-Shibl, Milad 'Assaf and Dani Gea'gea' unless they are to be charged with recognizably criminal offences and brought promptly to trial in accordance with international standards for fair trial;
- seeking assurances that the four men are being well-treated and not tortured or ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to allow them immediate access to their families, lawyers and whatever medical care they may require.

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

Fax: + 961 1 862 622
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

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

Fax: + 961 1 427 819

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 24 October 2001.