

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 18/25/97

18 December 1997

Further information on EXTRA 168/97 (MDE 18/24/97, 15 December 1997) - Fear of torture / Legal concern

LEBANON Hikmat Dib, engineer, member of the Engineers' Union
Georges Haddad, lawyer
Tony Harb, lawyer
Dani Aoun
Rabi' Trabulsi
Patrick Khouri, businessman
Wadi' Chukaib Ghurtubawi, trainee lawyer
Georges 'Attallah
Toni Munayber
Shafiq Sassin
Wasim Sa'b
Toni 'Attiq
Ziyad 'Absi, engineer
Elias Nimr Haddad
Elane Germani
Pierre Hayek
George Soma
Rita Kirouz
Bassam Latif
Nazar Khouri
Gilber Chahine
Rahi Sam'an
Michel Kirouz
Husam 'Unaysi

And many others

The people named above have now been released. Twenty-two of a total of 63 detainees were charged by the Lebanese prosecutor general for participating in an illegal demonstration, but were later released by civilian judges without bail. Ten others were referred to the military court for resisting security forces while carrying out their duty, but the military court did not press charges and the detainees were subsequently released. Thirty-one others were released without charge.

It emerged that Hikmat Dib, an engineer who had been previously detained and reportedly tortured, sustained injuries during the demonstration and was admitted to hospital after his release.

The arrest and detention of the above-named and many others during a demonstration on 14 December in protest against the banning of a live TV interview with former Lebanese army commander Michel 'Aoun generated wide concern especially among lawyers and other professions. The Bar Association has staged a three-day strike in protest against the Lebanese authorities' handling of the demonstration and their apparent infringement of the Lebanese Constitution which guarantees freedom of expression and assembly. In 1993 the Lebanese authorities imposed an indefinite ban on all demonstrations throughout the county.

No further action is required for the time being. Thank you to all who sent appeals.