

22 March 2000

UA 66/00

Fear of Torture and Ill-treatment / Legal concern

ISRAEL/SOUTH LEBANON Mohamed As'ad Yassin, aged 29, Lebanese Red Cross
volunteer
Muhsin Nasrallah, aged 35, construction worker
Aba-Dharr Shugeir, aged 23, student

Aba-Dharr Shugeir, Muhsin Nasrallah and Mohamed As'ad Yassin were arrested on 1, 7 and 19 March 2000 respectively. All are now believed to be at Khiam Detention Centre (see below), where detainees are systematically tortured and ill-treated, and many have been held for years without charge or trial.

All three are from villages in the Israeli-occupied area of south Lebanon. Mohamed As'ad Yassin lives in Dibbin, Muhsin Nasrallah lives in 'Aynata and Aba-Dharr Shugeir lives in Mays al-jabal.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Khiam Detention Centre is the main South Lebanon Army (SLA) detention and interrogation centre in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon. The SLA is Israel's proxy militia, operating in the area under Israeli occupation. Prisoners are believed to be held at Khiam without charge or trial for up to 14 years. Former detainees have described systematic torture and ill-treatment, including beating, whipping, torture with electronic shocks and dousing with hot and cold water.

Israel asserts that it is not responsible for Khiam Detention Centre and directs all inquiries about it to the SLA, but there are clear links between Israeli forces in south Lebanon and the Khiam administration. In September 1999, the head of the Israeli army's Operations Division admitted to Israel's High Court that members of Israel's internal security service, the General Security Service (GSS), "cooperate with members of the SLA, and even assist them by means of professional guidance and training...and hold meetings several times annually with SLA interrogators at Khiam prison." According to the officer, in the first seven months of 1999, the GSS visited the prison three times. The officer also admitted that the salaries of the interrogators at Khiam Detention Centre were paid directly by the Israeli army. The officer stated that the Israeli army intended to stop paying the interrogators.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- seeking assurances that Aba-Dharr Shugeir, Muhsin Nasrallah and Mohamed As'ad Yassin were arrested on 1, 7 and 19 March 2000 respectively will not be tortured or ill-treated in any way during their detention;
- calling for their immediate release if they are not charged with recognizably criminal offences and tried according to international standards for fair trial;
- urging the Israeli government to respect its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

APPEALS TO:

Ehud Barak
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Hakirya, Jerusalem 91007
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem
Faxes: + 972 2 566 4838
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Major General (Res.) Uri Lubrani

Coordinator of Government Activities in Lebanon
Ministry of Defence
7 'A' Street
Hakiryia, Tel Aviv, Israel
Telegrams: Uri Lubrani, Tel Aviv, Israel
Faxes: + 972 3 697 7358
Salutation: Dear Major General

General Antoine Lahad
South Lebanon Army
c/o Lieutenant-General Shaul Mufaz
Chief of General Staff
7 'A' Street
Hakiryia, Tel Aviv, Israel
Telegrams: General Lahad, c/o Chief General Staff, Tel Aviv, Israel
**Faxes: + 972 3 691 6940 (write c/o Lieutenant-General Shaul Mufaz, Chief
of General Staff)**
Salutation: Dear General

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 May 2000.