

EXTRA 142/99

Fear of t

ISRAEL/SOUTH LEBANON Mariam Sobeiti (f), aged 49
Ibrahim Fadlallah, aged 60
'Ali Khalil Khanafer, aged 24
Bilal Mahmud Ja'afar, aged 17
Ghunwa Mahmud Ja'afar, aged 21 (f)
Hussein Muhammad Samhat, aged 65
Hussein Ahmad Samhat, aged 39
Najwa Ahmad Samhat (f), his wife
Ahmad Hussein Samhat, aged 15, their son

The nine people named above, including two minors, were reportedly arrested on 7 October 1999 in their village, Aainata, deep inside Israeli-occupied south Lebanon. They are now believed to be held in Khiam Detention Centre where Amnesty International fears that they may be tortured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Khiam Detention Centre is the main South Lebanon Army (SLA) detention and interrogation centre in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon. At least 130 detainees are presently believed to be held there. Prisoners have been held without charge or trial for up to 14 years. Former detainees have described systematic torture and other ill-treatment, including beating, whipping, torture with electric shocks and dousing with hot and cold water. Detainees are routinely denied access to lawyers.

Israel asserts that it is not responsible for Khiam Detention Centre and directs all inquiries to the SLA, but there are clear links between Israeli forces in south Lebanon and the Khiam administration. Last month, 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 al-Khiam prison." According to the officer, in the first seven months of this year, 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 the nine people reportedly arrested 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";
- urging full respect for the Convention on the Rights of the Child with respect to the treatment of Bilal Mahmud Ja'afar, aged 17, and Ahmad Hussein Samhat, aged 15.

APPEALS TO:

Ehud Barak
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Hakirya, Jerusalem 91007, Israel
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Faxes: + 972 2 566 4838 / 691 7915
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Brigadier General Uri Shoham
Judge Advocate General
6 David Elazar Street
Hakirya, Tel Aviv, Israel
Telegrams: Judge Advocate General, Tel Aviv, Israel
Faxes: + 972 3 569 4370
Salutation: Dear Brigadier General

General Antoine Lahad
South Lebanon Army
c/o Lieutenant-General Shaul Mufaz
Chief of General Staff
7 'A' Street
Hakirya, 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 8 November 1999.