

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial Executions

22 October 1990

LEBANON: Over 30 people captured and executed by Syrian forces

Amnesty International is gravely concerned over reports that at least 30 people captured by the Syrian forces in Lebanon have been extrajudicially executed and has called on both the Lebanese and Syrian governments to establish independent enquiries into these allegations.

At least 30 supporters of General Michel Aoun are reported to have been extrajudicially executed following their capture by Syrian troops on 13-14 October. Amnesty International does not yet have any names of the victims but they are mostly reported to have been young men who were partially stripped and had their hands tied behind their backs before being shot in the head at close range. Many were believed to have been soldiers from Michel Aoun's ranks. Their bodies were later seen by journalists at the mortuary at Baabda Hospital.

Amnesty International is calling on the Lebanese government to set up an official inquiry into these allegations and to take measures to prevent any further killings. It is also urging the Syrian authorities to investigate the specific role of their troops in these incidents.

Amnesty International is also urging the Lebanese and Syrian authorities to ensure the safety of prisoners in their custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The killings occurred after a military assault by a joint force of Syrian troops and Lebanese Army soldiers launched against forces supporting General Michel Aoun on 13 October. General Aoun had been in rebellion against the Lebanese Government for about two years. The rebellion was effectively defeated on 13-14 October after fighting in which combatants from both sides were killed and which resulted in General Aoun seeking refuge in the French Embassy in Beirut.

Although the full circumstances are not clear, the killings of prisoners are said to have been carried out by Syrian troops in retaliation for shootings of their soldiers by Aoun supporters. There is widespread concern for the safety of other prisoners of the conflict reportedly held by the Lebanese and Syrian armies. Some are said to have been taken from Lebanon to undisclosed places of imprisonment in Syria.

Amnesty International has previously received reports of extrajudicial executions and torture of prisoners by Syrian forces in Lebanon. Torture of prisoners is widespread in Syria.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters: (to be adapted according to whether you are writing to the Lebanese or Syrian authorities)

- expressing grave concern about reports of at least 30 extrajudicial executions of people captured by Syrian forces in Lebanon;

- urging both the Lebanese and Syrian Governments to investigate immediately and impartially these allegations, and to make public the findings of such inquiries;
- calling for any persons found responsible for human rights violations to be brought to justice;
- seeking assurances that all prisoners held by the Lebanese Army or Syrian forces assisting it should be fully protected from possible torture, ill-treatment or execution.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President
Hafez al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: PRESPL 419160 SY

His Excellency 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam
Vice President
Office of the President
Presidential Palace
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: Vice-President Khaddam, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: PRESPL 419160 SY

His Excellency Lt Gen Mustafa Tlas
Deputy Premier and Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Omayyad Square
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: Defence Minister, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 411082 SIGCOR SY; 411371 FERMOD SY;
411500 PADAR SY

His Excellency President Elias Hrawi
Office of the President
Beirut
The Lebanese Republic

Telegrams: President Hrawi, Beirut, Lebanon

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Syria and Lebanon in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 December 1990.

