

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 18/08/96

31 December 1996

Further information on UA 300/96 (MDE 18/06/96, 23 December 1996) and follow-up (MDE 18/07/96, 30 December) - Fear of torture / Legal concern

LEBANON Pierre ATTALLAH, aged 50, journalist
Ghassan BARDAWIL
Charles ROUSTUM
Obad ZWEIN

Six of those detained incommunicado after dozens of members of Christian opposition parties were rounded up following anti-Syrian attacks have now been released. Antoine AZI, Ghassan HADDAD, Samir GHAZAL, Joseph GHOSN, Zakhia AL-KOSSAIFI and Joseph TOUQ were released without bail on 30 December 1996 by the judge at the military court in Beirut.

Pierre ATTALLAH, 50, an editor in *al-Nahar* newspaper in Lebanon, was charged before the military court with inciting religious or ethnic conflict under Article 317 of the Penal Code (which carries a penalty of up to three years' imprisonment) and with making contact with the enemy under Article 278 of the Penal Code (which carries a penalty of up to life imprisonment. This accusation is said to relate to a meeting with the head of the Guardians of the Cedar Party, Etienne Saqr. The latter lives in the area of South Lebanon under Israeli control and has been sentenced *in absentia* by a Lebanese court). Ghassan BARDAWIL was charged under Article 288 of the Penal Code with distributing leaflets, and with damaging Lebanon's relations with a friendly country (Syria). Pierre Attallah had access on 30 December to his family and lawyer and said he had not been ill-treated.

Charles ROUSTUM and Obad ZWEIN are expected to appear before the military court on 31 December 1996.

PLEASE CONTINUE APPEALS TO THE AUTHORITIES PREVIOUSLY LISTED:

- welcoming the releases and the access granted to the families and lawyers of Pierre Attallah and Ghassan Bardawil;
- asking that allegations of torture or ill-treatment of some detainees, including Charbal Shami and George Fayyad, be promptly investigated and the findings of the investigation made public;
- stressing that AI recognizes the right of the Lebanese Government to bring to justice those who have committed violent acts, but that arrests and detention should be carried out in conformity with international human rights standards ratified by Lebanon.