
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 162/93

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 7 DECEMBER 1993

AI INDEX: NWS 11/162/93
DISTR: SC/PO
NO OF WORDS: 1976

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - SOUTH KOREA
EXTERNAL FOR RESPONSE ONLY - LEBANON, SUDAN

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

PLEASE NOTE: The Lebanon item enclosed is not to go to media unless information on these cases is requested. The item has been written in case there is an increase in inquiries on these cases. An update on a fourth missing Israeli soldier, Ron Arad, was issued on 11 October 1993 (MDE 18/WU 02/93). Likewise, the item on Sudan should only be used in response to media enquiries - although it will be distributed by AI to UN media in New York.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137
India - 15 December - PLEASE SEE NEWS SERVICE 159

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

****South Africa - 8 December/DELAYED**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 151

This item, based on an AI letter to De Klerk, was intended to be embargoed for 8 December. It has been delayed, but should be with you in the next couple of days. It will be sent for immediate release to South African media and sections may use it as they wish in connection with the Nobel Peace Prize.

****Human Rights Day Speech - 9 December**** - The speech was sent to sections last night. A news release summarising the main points of the speech is being prepared and should be finalized and sent to sections tomorrow at the latest. This only needs to be translated/used by sections who are planning to include the speech in their human rights day activities. It will be sent by the IS to key international media.

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES 1994

Children - 7 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161
Tunisia - 12 January
USA death penalty - 26 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161
South Africa - 16 February SEE NEWS SERVICE 159
Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161
Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

News Service 162/93

AI INDEX: MDE 18/WU 03/93
7 DECEMBER 1993

LEBANON: UPDATE ON THE CASES OF ZACHARY BAUMEL, ZVI FELDMAN AND YEHUDA KATZ, THREE ISRAELI SOLDIERS MISSING IN LEBANON SINCE JUNE 1982

Three Israeli soldiers missing in Lebanon since June 1982 remain unaccounted for. There have been conflicting reports about their fate, including some suggesting that they were captured alive and taken to Syria. At the end of November 1993 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) gave the Israeli authorities part of the identification tag of one of them, but their fate remains unknown. Amnesty International continues to work for their fate to be clarified.

Sergeant Zachary Baumel (born 17 November 1960), First Sergeant Zvi Feldman (born 29 December 1956) and Corporal Yehuda Katz (born 18 July 1959) went missing at the battle of Sultan Ya'qub, in the Beqa' valley in Lebanon, between Israeli and Syrian forces on 11 June 1982. Palestinian fighters are also reported to have been involved in the battle. The three Israeli soldiers were part of the crews of two tanks that were hit and disabled during the battle.

Zachary Baumel and Zvi Feldman were in one tank together with First Sergeant Hezi Shai, the commander, and First Sergeant Ariel Lieberman. All four are reported to have left their tank safely and to have dispersed in an attempt to escape from the battleground.

Hezi Shai was captured the night of 11 June and held by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC), a Palestinian armed group allied to Syria and led by Ahmad Jibril. Hezi Shai was returned to Israel on 20 May 1985 as part of a prisoner exchange between Israel and the PFLP-GC, which had held him in secret until mid-1984. Ariel Lieberman was captured on 12 June by Syrian troops. He was returned on 28 June 1984. It is not known what happened to Zachary Baumel and Zvi Feldman.

Yehuda Katz was in a second tank, together with Captain Zohar Lifschitz, the commander, who was killed in the battle, and two other soldiers who managed to escape safely from the battlefield. It is not known what happened to Yehuda Katz.

Reports speak of Israeli prisoners of war (POWs), or their bodies, being brought to the village of 'Aita al-Fakhar, near Sultan Ya'qub, on 11 June 1982. They are alleged to have been paraded there by Palestinian fighters, apparently including members of *Fatah* (the largest Palestinian armed group) and the *Sa'iqa* (another Palestinian armed group, allied to Syria).

According to several media accounts, on the afternoon of 11 June 1982 a captured Israeli tank with a number of Israeli POWs on it was paraded through Damascus. The *Sa'iqa* was apparently responsible for organizing the parade. Syrian officials are reported to have described the men as Israeli POWs who were members of the tank crew. According to at least one alleged eye-witness, there were three men who looked weary; one or two had bandages around their limbs. The identity of the men described as Israeli POWs is not known, but none of the Israeli POWs later returned to Israel is known to have been involved in this parade. In contradictory reports, other alleged eye-witnesses reported seeing three dead bodies on what was presumably the same tank in the Damascus parade. Information attributed to members of *Sa'iqa* referred to corpses, not live prisoners, being paraded on a tank, but said that only one of the bodies belonged to an Israeli soldier, the other two being those of Palestinian fighters paraded by mistake.

On 4 July 1982, four people identified as Israeli soldiers were officially buried in the Jewish cemetery in Damascus. Their bodies were returned to Israel on 24 June 1984. One was positively identified as Zohar Lifschitz. According to the Israeli authorities, the other three bodies were not those of any of the missing Israeli soldiers. The documents returned with the bodies were found to belong to Israeli soldiers who were alive in Israel. Also according to the Israeli authorities, a second examination of the three bodies was carried out in December 1991 by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which confirmed that the bodies were not those of the missing Israeli soldiers.

The Syrian authorities are reported to have denied knowledge of the fate of the three missing Israeli soldiers. In August 1991, PFLP-GC leader Ahmad Jibril was reported saying he did not know their fate but he presumed they were dead. There have been other reports suggesting that Zachary Baumel was held alive somewhere in Lebanon late in 1982. Most recently, in November 1993, a PLO official was reported as saying that these three soldiers were dead and buried in Syria. At the end of November 1993 PLO Chairman and Fatah

leader Yasser Arafat gave the Israeli authorities part of the identification tag of Zachary Baumel. However, the fate of these three soldiers remains unknown.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called for clarification of the fate of Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz. Most recently, in January 1993 it renewed its appeals on their behalf, as well as on behalf of Ron Arad, a fourth missing Israeli soldier captured in Lebanon in 1986, in letters to the Lebanese, Syrian and Iranian authorities. No response was received. The cases of all four soldiers were publicized by Amnesty International in May 1992 and February 1993 in two public statements, the latter delivered before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

Amnesty International continues to call on the Syrian authorities to take steps to help ensure that the fate of these three soldiers is clarified. If they are alive and held as hostages, solely in order to obtain the release of prisoners held by the Israeli authorities, they should be released immediately and unconditionally. Otherwise they should be treated fully in compliance with the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (the Third Geneva Convention of 1949). At the very least they should be allowed access to the ICRC and to communicate with their families.

Amnesty International also appeals to the Lebanese authorities and the PLO to provide any information they may have on the fate and whereabouts of these three soldiers.

ENDS/

**AI INDEX: AFR 54/WU 02/93
7 DECEMBER 1993**

SUDAN: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CORRECTS STATEMENT BY SUDAN PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Amnesty International would like to correct information in a statement issued yesterday by the Sudan Permanent Mission to the United Nations (UN) in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly comparing the human rights records of Israel, Sudan, the United Kingdom and the USA. Amnesty International is concerned by the grave inaccuracy of statistics and misrepresentation of Amnesty International's concerns presented in this statement and questions the motives behind issuing such a statement.

The statistics given in Sudan's statement are wrongly purported to be drawn from Amnesty International's 1993 Annual Report, but most are not to be found in the report. In its 1993 Annual Report which covers events during 1992, Amnesty International details human rights abuses in 161 countries. The length of each entry does not bear any relation to the severity of human rights violations in that country, nor does Amnesty International compare one country's human rights record with another. The articles on each of the 161 countries covered are intended to give an objective picture of Amnesty International's concerns in each country.

The full Amnesty International 1993 Annual Report is available from the UN office of Amnesty International in New York, the International Secretariat in London, or any other of Amnesty International's national offices worldwide.

ENDS/

News Service 162/93

**AI INDEX: ASA 25/U 05/93
7 DECEMBER 1993**

SOUTH KOREA: THREAT OF IMMINENT EXECUTION OF SENTENCED PRISONERS

Prisoners on death row in South Korea face an imminent threat of execution and Amnesty International is urgently calling on the South Korean Government not to carry out executions and to commute all death sentences.

Nine prisoners were executed in December 1991 and nine others in December 1992. In this context, death row inmates and other South Koreans are concerned that more prisoners may be executed in the next few weeks.

At least 30 prisoners appear to have been on death row for two years or more. The prisoners on death row live in perpetual fear that they may be executed when the authorities so decide. In practice, according to sources familiar with the execution procedures, prisoners are not told of their impending execution until the day it is due to take place.

Amnesty International is concerned that the decision to order an execution is arbitrary. The Minister of Justice makes this determination alone, basing this decision on background comments from the government's Correctional Committee. In effect, some prisoners appear to be given a reprieve and avoid execution for a time, at the discretion of the Minister of Justice, while others were executed without explanation.

The families of prisoners and lawyers of prisoners due to be executed receive no advance notification of executions - whereas the media learn of executions before or soon after they take place. In at least one case in 1992, relatives of a prisoner, who had been visiting him regularly, learned of his execution, on 28 December, from the press.

Prisoners sentenced to death generally remain handcuffed throughout their imprisonment, a practice which Amnesty International believes amounts to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, prohibited under Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by South Korea in 1991. Prisoners sometimes spend years on death row. Amnesty International is concerned that the lengthy and indefinite wait on death row also amounts to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases. It considers the death penalty to be a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Amnesty International urges the South Korean Government to abolish the death penalty and to commute all death sentences.

As a temporary measure until such abolition takes place, Amnesty International urges the government to stop carrying out any executions and commute all death sentences. It also calls on the South Korea Government to immediately end the long-term handcuffing of prisoners sentenced to death, a practice contrary to international human rights standards.

ENDS/