

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 385/92 (MDE 18/02/92, 7 December 1992) and follow-up:
MDE 18/03/92, 11 December 1992 - Legal Concern/Fear of torture

LEBANON: Further arrests of suspected supporters of General Michel 'Aoun
including:

Antoine Samieh	Michel Abu Nassar
José 'Afif	Antoine Saqr
Emile al-Hachem	Jirjis Shamaleh
Nu'man Antoine	Mansour Sfeir
Fadi Baroud	Emily Azzi (female)
Jean Abi Rad	Dib Flouti
Shukrallah Salameh	

Amnesty International has received the following new information regarding eleven of the above who were reportedly arrested shortly after Lebanon's Independence Day celebrations on 22 November 1992.

Eleven of the detainees whose cases had been referred to a military investigating judge have now reportedly been charged in connection with the distribution of leaflets on the occasion of Lebanon's Independence Day on 22 November 1992.

The charges have apparently been drawn up under Article 157 of the Military Penal Code, which deals with the printing and distribution of information through the media. José 'Afif has also reportedly been charged under Article 285 of the Penal Code which deals with unauthorized entry into enemy territory and unauthorized commercial contact with enemy nationals or residents. He is apparently accused of having visited an area in south Lebanon controlled by Israel and the South Lebanon Army.

Four of the eleven are said to be still held: Emile al-Hachem, Nu'man Antoine, Mansour Sfeir and José 'Afif (who remains under guard in the intensive care unit of the Hotel Dieu Hospital). An application for their release on bail was rejected on 31 December 1992, the same day on which they were first allowed to meet lawyers. The lawyers' visits are reported to have been limited to 15 minutes and to have taken place in the presence of guards. The other seven were reportedly released on bail of 300,000 Lebanese pounds each: Jean Abi Rad, Antoine Samieh, Shukrallah Salameh, Fadi Baroud, Michel Abu Nassar, Antoine Saqr and Jirjis Shamaleh. Amnesty International does not have information about the situation of others reportedly arrested in connection with the same event.

A number of public figures, including Foreign Minister Fares Boueiz, are reported in the press to have expressed concern about the manner in which the arrests were carried out. Defence Minister Mohsen Dalloul is later reported

to have said that the arrests were carried out legally and that the allegations of torture of the detainees were baseless. He is said to have referred to a statement by Antoine Samieh in which he denied that he had been tortured.

Amnesty International remains concerned that those detained may be prisoners of conscience. If so, they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Amnesty International is also concerned at continuing allegations that at least some of those detained were tortured or ill-treated and is calling for a thorough and impartial investigation of these allegations.

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FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/airmail letters either in English, French or your own language:

- welcoming the release of seven of the detainees who were reportedly arrested shortly after Independence day celebrations on 22 November 1992;

- expressing concern that Emile al-Hachem, Nu'man Antoine, Mansour Sfeir, José 'Afif and any others who are still detained in connection with this event may be prisoners of conscience, held solely for the non-violent expression of their political beliefs, and saying that if this is the case they should be released immediately and unconditionally;

- asking for detailed reasons for all the arrests carried out in connection with this event, and the current legal status of all concerned, including details of any formal charges against them;

- urging that all allegations of torture or ill-treatment be immediately and impartially investigated;

- urging that all detainees be given prompt and regular access to their lawyers and families in accordance with international standards for the treatment of detainees.

APPEALS TO:

1. President Elias Hrawi
Presidential Palace
Ba'abda
Beirut
Lebanon

Telegrams: President Hrawi, Beirut, Lebanon

Telexes: 21000

Salutation: His Excellency

2. Mohsen Dalloul
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Yarzeh, Beirut
Lebanon

Telegrams: Defence Minister Dalloul, Beirut, Lebanon

Telexes: 20901

Salutation: His Excellency

3. Bahij Tabbara
Minister of Justice
rue Sami Solh
Beirut
Lebanon

Telegrams: Justice Minister Tabbara, Beirut, Lebanon

Salutation: His Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: diplomatic representatives of LEBANON accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 February 1993.