

PUBLIC

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Torture/Medical concern/detention of asylum seekers

18 October 2000

LEBANON Trabun Ibrahim Laku, 35
Gilbert Kwagy
Adam Abu Bakr Adam
Salah Muhammad 'Abdallah

At least 200 other Sudanese asylum-seekers

At least 200 Sudanese asylum-seekers are being tortured to force them to drop their asylum claims and leave Lebanon, according to reports received by Amnesty International.

They have been charged with entering Lebanon illegally, and are held at *Furn al-Shibak* General Security detention centre in the capital, Beirut, and other detention centres around the country.

Of the four asylum-seekers whose names are known to Amnesty International, Gilbert Kwagy has had his arm broken, apparently as a result of torture.

Trabun Ibrahim Laku was arrested on 19 April, although he had lodged an asylum application with the UNHCR in January and had been given documentation to prove this, which he showed when he was arrested. He was charged with illegally entering Lebanon, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment by a court in the Palace of Justice in Beirut.

When he completed his sentence at 'Alya Prison he was not released; instead he was taken to *Furn al-Shibak* and asked to produce his passport, apparently to arrange for his deportation. When he failed to produce his passport he was reportedly forced out of his cell with his hands cuffed behind his back and beaten with batons until he fell to his knees. At this point he received two severe blows to his lower back.

Apparently as a result of the torture he became incontinent and suffered severe back pain. However, although he was gravely ill, he was held incommunicado for a further two months. When he was finally released on 14 October he was immediately admitted to Al-Karantina Hospital. He is partially paralysed and suffering from severe back pain, with a fracture to the lumbar region of the spine, and is incontinent.

There has been no investigation into his claims that he has been tortured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of asylum-seekers, including Sudanese and Iraqis, are currently detained in Lebanon. They are reportedly tortured and ill-treated, especially while held in incommunicado detention. Even refugees recognized by the UNHCR are reportedly detained and forcibly repatriated.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic, French or your own language:

- expressing grave concern at the detention and ill-treatment of asylum-seekers in Lebanon;
- urging that Gilbert Kwagy, Adam Abu Bakr Adam and Salah Muhammad 'Abdalla are allowed immediate and regular access to their lawyers and the UNHCR, and that they are given whatever medical care they need as a matter of urgency;

- calling for them and all other detained asylum-seekers to be brought promptly before a judicial authority to determine whether their detention is lawful and in accordance with international standards;
- seeking assurances that detained asylum-seekers are being well-treated and not tortured or ill-treated;
- calling for an independent investigation of allegations that Trabun Ibrahim Laku and other asylum-seekers have been tortured;
- calling for the perpetrators of torture to be brought to justice according to international standards for fair trial;
- reminding the Lebanese government of its obligations under the customary principle of *non-refoulement*, which prohibits the return of any person to a country where they might risk serious human rights violations, including torture and the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President Emile Lahoud
Office of the President
Ba'abda Palace
Ba'abda, Beirut
Lebanon

Telegram: President Lahoud, Beirut, Lebanon

Fax: + 961 1 425 393

Telexes: 21000

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Nabih Berri
Speaker of the National Assembly
National Assembly
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Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Judge 'Adnan 'Addoum
Prosecutor General
Palace of Justice
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Lebanon

Fax: + 961 1 422 957

Maj Gen Jamil al-Sayyed
Director of General Security
C/o Ministry of the Interior
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and 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 29 November 2000.