

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 18/016/2002

UA 370/02

Fear of torture/Incommunicado detention  
Possible prisoner of conscience

20 December 2002

LEBANON

Hassan Ahmad al-Nahas (m), 51 businessman

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Hassan Ahmad Al-Nahas, married and father of 10 children, has been held at an interrogation centre of the Internal Security in Saida since 9 December. It is feared that he might be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Hassan Ahmad al-Nahas' arrest is reportedly related to some leaflets which were given to him at a mosque in Saida where he was praying on 6 December. Amnesty International believes that he may have been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and calls for his immediate release if he cannot be charged with any recognizable criminal offence.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Lebanon, political and criminal detainees are frequently tortured or ill-treated. For example, in September, Lebanese citizen Khaled Omar Minawi was reported to have been tortured in incommunicado detention in the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre by a method known as the *ballanco*. This involves the wrists being handcuffed behind the back, a rope being tied to the handcuffs and passed over a beam, so that it can be pulled and the detainee lifted off the ground. Reportedly he was also severely beaten in the stomach and face, in addition to being deprived of food for five days. His trial begins on 22 December 2002 (see NS 232/02, MDE 18/015/2002, *Lebanon, Political Trial by Military Court Must Meet International Human Rights Standards*).

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible in Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- calling for Hassan Ahmad Al-Nahas to be released immediately as a possible prisoner of conscience unless recognizable criminal charges are to be brought against him;
- seeking assurance that Hassan Ahmad Al-Nahas is not to be subjected to torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- urging that he will be allowed immediate access to his family, lawyer and any medical care he may need;
- seeking an explanation as to why Hassan Ahmad Al-Nahas was arrested.

#### APPEALS TO:

Mr Jamil al-Sayyed  
Director of the General Security  
Directorate of the General Security  
Badaro, Beirut  
Lebanon

**Fax: +961 1 422 850**

**Salutation: Dear Mr Jamil al-Sayyed**

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  
**Telex:** 21000  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

His Excellency Samir Jisr  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Rue Sami Solh  
Beirut  
Lebanon

**Fax:** + 961 1 611 142  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES 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 31 January 2003.