



An angry mother of a missing person holds two Lebanese Cross women workers at Barbir Thursday as part of a protest against ineffectual government action to secure the release of the kidnapped.



A Lebanese Red Cross car takes two of its women workers away after they had been recovered from protesting relatives of kidnapped victims Thursday at Barbir.

Daily Star photo by Ahmed Azakir

Relatives of kidnapped step up pressure in Barbir protest

By Dinah Kassir
Staff Reporter

Parents and relatives of kidnap victims and missing persons escalated their action against Lebanese political leaders Thursday after a threat issued Wednesday by the International Red Cross to "stop Red Cross prisoner visits if the captives were not released soon."

Parents of the kidnapped gathered Thursday morning at the Barbir area on the Western end of the crossing in the hope of meeting with political leaders on their way to Villa Mansour, where a parliamentary session was scheduled for 10:30 a.m.

Dozens of women, most wearing black, displayed photographs of their sons, brothers, husbands or fathers. They began gathering at 9:00 a.m. in front of Barbir Hospital, planning to block the path of deputies and ministers as they tried to reach the temporary parliament house.

Although this was the third time parents of the kidnapped had met at Barbir, their gathering Thursday was more poignant than previous meetings because of the Red Cross threat issued 24 hours earlier by Michel Amiguet, Chief of the Red Cross delegation in Beirut, that it would dissociate itself from the kidnapping problem.

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His threat shocked parents of the kidnapped, whose despair and suffering was never so apparent as on Thursday when the international organization's threat to leave them without help took them by surprise.

Marcelle Hneine, 33, whose brother was kidnapped in the mountains in July 1982, said Thursday's action was aimed at putting maximum pressure on Lebanese political leaders "who should understand that the threat made by the Lebanese International Red Cross is not a joke."

Mrs. Hneine added that the parents of the kidnapped now feel that the Red Cross is their last resort and that if it withdraws its assistance, all relatives of the kidnap victims will feel abandoned.

The parents cried as they shouted at the politicians who drove by them in their limousines. They cursed the politicians, damned them, and as a last resort, burned tires along their path to force them to stop.

An old woman, dressed in black and displaying the photographs of four sons, looked more desperate and helpless than the others. In tears, she faced the crossing where the deputies and ministers had just entered, and began to lament

and curse "those pigs who only know how to get drunk, but do not how to free my little baby..."

Every car that passed was besieged by the women who banged on it, trying to stop it, and talk with the officials inside.

All the deputies and ministers have armor-plated cars, and few of them stopped or tried to open the windows.

Realizing that no official was willing to meet them, the relatives of the kidnapped threw stones at the cars, damaging at least three of them.

At 11:30, a Lebanese Red Cross van appeared at Barbir and was taken by the women who dragged 11 people from the vehicle.

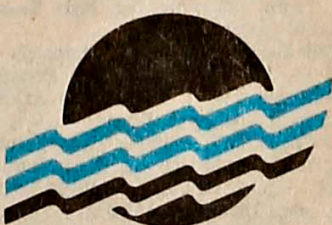
The Lebanese Red Cross employees were harassed by the crowd who pleaded again and again for help in releasing the kidnap victims.

The 11 people pulled out of the van were later rescued by the Internal Security Forces (ISF) policemen who took them to safety. A delegation of parents was later taken to Mansour Villa where they met with Ministry of the Interior Joseph Skaff.

In the meanwhile the International Red Cross headquarters in Geneva announced it has received a donation of three million Swiss francs (\$1.3 million) from Saudi Arabia.

A Red Cross spokesman in Geneva said the Saudi funds were earmarked for the general work of the committee in 1984.

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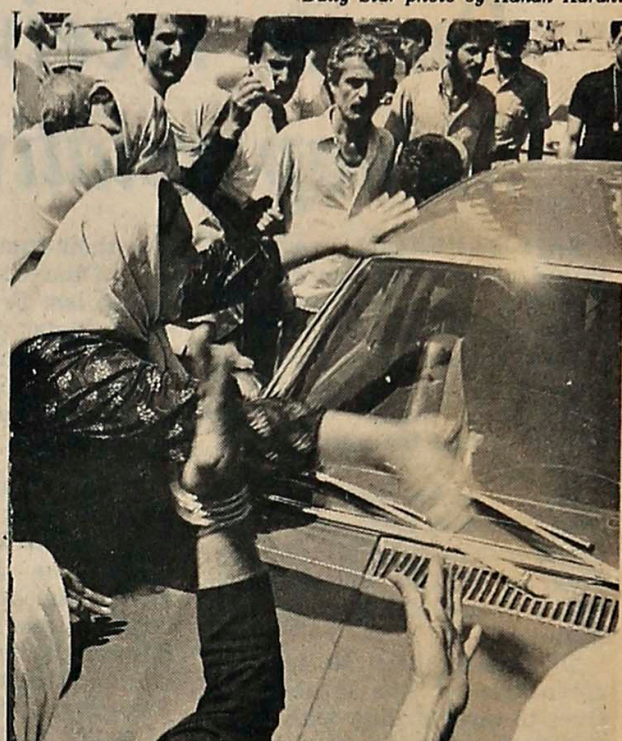


Relatives of kidnap victims shout in front of Barbir Hospital, Thursday. The relatives were not allowed to approach parliament house on the Museum crossing to protest inaction on the kidnap question.

Daily Star photo by Adnan Karaki



Um Aziz, with the pictures of her four kidnapped sons attached to her dress, fans a fire Thursday at the entrance to the Western end of the Museum crossing. photo by Ahmed Azakir



Distraught women surround the car of former Prime Minister Rashid Solh at Barbir as he was being driven to Mansour Palace for the Parliament session. Daily Star photo by Adnan Karaki



Smoke drifts skyward Thursday as relatives of missing people attempt to prevent ministers and deputies from reaching the Parliament building.

Daily Star photo by Ahmed Azakir