

Doris Ohlemeyer

Innsbrucker Allee 42
D-47249 Duisburg (Germany)

30 November 1999

Mrs. Wadad Halwani
Dar al-Aman Bldg.
Ibn Manzour Street
Ras al-Nabei
Beirut - Lebanon

Dear Mrs. Halwani,

you may remember my letter dated 16 May 1998. I told you that I am a member of Amnesty International and that the Duisburg group of that organisation keeps pressing the Lebanese government to set up an independent commission to investigate the fates of the people who "disappeared" during the civil war. In the meantime we wrote many letters to members of both the former and the present governments. As I informed you on 16 May 1998, we had letters from two ministers, who expressed sympathy and concern, but obviously were unable to bring about any developments in that direction.

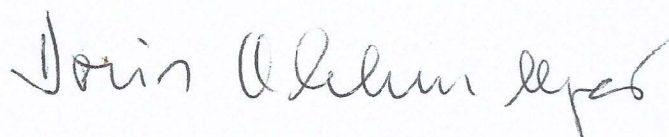
From a press report published late in October I gathered that the families of the people who "disappeared" during the civil war are still fighting for the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry. On account of that report I wrote again to the following members of the Lebanese government:

H.E. President Emile Lahoud
H.E. Salim El-Hoss, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E. Michel Murr, Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of the Interior and Municipal Affairs
H.E. Joseph Chaoul, Minister of Justice
H.E. Ghazi Zuayter, Minister of National Defence
H.E. Anwar Al-Khalil, Minister of Information
and the Affairs of Displace Persons
and also to H.E. Nabih Beri, Speaker of the National Assembly

Enclosed please find copy of my letter of 28 November 1999 to President Lahoud. The wording of all letters is the same.

I wish you and your committee that your call for a commission of inquiry is complied with soon. We shall go on to support you by writing to the Lebanese government again and again.

Yours sincerely,



Doris Ohlemeyer

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D-47249 Duisburg
(Germany)

28 November 1999

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

Your Excellency,

On 23 August 1999 I last wrote to you about the people who "disappeared" in the Lebanese civil war. ~~It appears that since then no steps have been taken in this matter although it would be such a relief for the bereaved to know what exactly happened to their loved ones in those days.~~

My unceasing efforts to convince you that this problem needs addressing are given a fresh impetus by the fact that the relatives of the "disappeared" continue to call on the Lebanese government to have an official commission of inquiry established.

According to a report I received family and friends of the 17.000 people still listed as missing from Lebanon's devastating 1975-90 civil war launched end of october a campaign to press the government to investigate their fate. This campaign dubbed "We have the right to know" took place at Beirut's Press Syndicate. **Mrs. Wadad Halwani**, head of the Committee of the Relatives of the Kidnapped and the Missing (CRKM), whose husband went missing during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, **said: "We demand the creation of an official Commission of inquiry to seriously investigate the fate of all those who were kidnapped or went missing on Lebanese territory. - The commission should declare the results of its investigation within a period not exceeding one year from the day it is created."**

Another campaigner of the Friends of the CRKM, Mr. Albert Abi Azar, a priest, said: "We ask every citizen to address a letter to the President to this end." He vowed to use "all peaceful means to put pressure on the Lebanese state to secure the rightful demands of the relative."

Mr. Halwani said the committee was seeking the establishment of an official commission of inquiry like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in postapartheid South Africa or similar inquiries in Chile and Argentina. "In Latin America, in South Africa Governments which did not have any relation with the events that occurred took on the responsibility towards the citizens and determined the fate of the kidnapped and missing", she said.

CRKM also demanded a national programme to help relatives of the kidnapped and missing "stay away from hunger, unemployment and sickness while guaranteeing them a dignified and free life".

The committee called for April 13, the day the Lebanese civil war started, to be declared a national day of remembrance for the kidnapped and for a memorial to be erected to the missing and the other casualties of the civil war.

Mrs. Halwani: "We do not want to open war wounds. We want a real peace and everyone knows that it cannot be established until all the war files are closed."

The urgency of this appeal demonstrates how strong the need of the bereaved to have the fates of their loved one clarified still is, and surely continues to be.

As I told you before I am a member of Amnesty International. This organisation has for years been calling on the Lebanese government to set up an independent commission of inquiry.

Let me, therefore, repeat my urgent call on you to do everything in your power to have an independent commission of inquiry set up, so that the fates of the many "disappeared" people can be clarified at last.

Ten out of those 17.000 are the following:

Shawqi 'Ali Jamul, born in 1954 in Deir al-Zahrani, Shi'ite Mulim. He is married and has two daughters. He "disappeared" on 16 September 1982 at Tayyar checkpoint at Khalda.

Hassan Muhammad Zahwi, born in 1951, "disappeared" on 5 September 1983 on the coastal road from Beirut to the south, probably in the al-Remeila area.

'Issam 'Ali al-Masri, born in 1964 in Beirut, "disappeared" on 18 September 1982 at al-Barjawi checkpoint close to Baidoun Mosque in Ashrafiyye.

Mohie ed-Din Hashisho, born in 1927, "disappeared" on 14 September 1982 at 11 am. He was arrested at his home in Sidon by approximately 20 armed men in military uniform.

Muhammad Mahmoud Mansour, born in 1955, "disappeared" on 26 August 1983 in the al-Barbir district.

Samia Muhammad al-Mahmoud, born in 1958, "disappeared" on 5 September 1982 in the al-Mathaf area, Beirut.

Muhammad Abu Zeid, born in 1943 was kidnapped on 17 September 1982 by the Lebanese Forces along with his three sons **Hamza Muhammad Abu Zeid**, **Tayssir Muhammad Abu Zeid** and **Nasser Muhammad Abu Zeid**. Nothing has been heard of them since.

Yours most respectfully,

Janis O'Connell

Air mail

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