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**URGENT**

Geneva, 10 November 2011

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Chairperson of the Committee against Torture.

I would like to draw the attention of Your Excellency's Government to allegations received regarding the intimidation of Mr. Saadeddine Shatila, the representative of Alkarama in Lebanon. Alkarama is a Non-Governmental Organization working in the field of human rights. It monitors and documents cases of torture and submits information to United Nations bodies and mechanisms, including the Committee against Torture. This is done in accordance with the provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Rules of Procedure of the Committee against Torture.

According to the information received by the Committee:

- On 22 July 2011, an agent of the Military Intelligence Administration visited Mr. Shatila, presenting him with a document summoning him to appear at the Head Quarters of the Military Intelligence Administration on 25 July 2011, at 8 a.m.;

Her Excellency  
Ms. Najla RIACHI ASSAKER  
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Permanent Representative of Lebanon  
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- On 25 July 2011, Mr. Shatila presented himself, at 8 a.m., at the Military Intelligence Administration. His telephone was confiscated and his lawyer was not allowed to attend him. There, he was questioned until 8 p.m., and subsequently released. The interrogation was related to an investigation against him for "publishing information which damages the reputation of the Military" and "spreading false news";
- On 26 July 2011, 12 armed agents of the Military Police, in uniform, and of the Military Intelligence, in civilian clothes, visited Mr. Shatila's office and home. As he was not there, these agents called him, from his home, to his mobile phone, to request him to go to the Military Court the following day;
- On 27 July 2011, Mr. Shatila went to the Court and was questioned by the Commissioner of the Government to the Military Court, Judge Saqr Saqr. His lawyer was not allowed to be present in the room during the questioning. Again, Mr. Shatila was questioned about his work, as Alkarama representative, and his sources of information. The case was then referred to the First Investigating Judge of the Military Court, Judge Riad Abu Ghida;
- On 31 October 2011, Mr. Shatila had a hearing before Military Court Judge Riad Abu Ghida, with his lawyer. Again, the judge was interested in his work as Alkarama representative in Lebanon and requested him to reveal his sources of information. The next hearing of Mr. Shatila is scheduled for 14 November 2011.

The Committee is concerned that in accordance with the information received, these allegations of intimidation of Mr. Shatila are related to his peaceful activities, as well as of Alkarama's, in promoting and protecting human rights, and in particular with monitoring and documenting cases of torture.

With regard to these allegations, I would like to refer to Your Excellency's Government the following articles of the Convention against Torture:

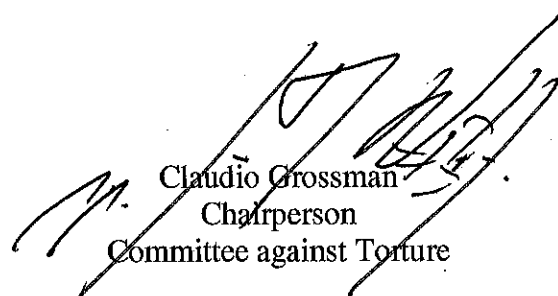
- Article 12: "Each State Party shall ensure that its competent authorities proceed to a prompt and impartial investigation, wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture has been committed in any territory under its jurisdiction."
- Article 13: "Each State Party shall ensure that any individual who alleges he has been subjected to torture in any territory under its jurisdiction has the right to complain to, and to have his case promptly and impartially examined by, its competent authorities. Steps shall be taken to ensure that the complainant and witnesses are protected against all ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of his complaint or any evidence given."
- Article 16, paragraph 1: "Each State Party shall undertake to prevent in any territory under its jurisdiction other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in article I, when such acts are committed by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. In particular, the obligations contained in articles 10, 11, 12 and 13 shall apply with the substitution for references to torture of references to other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Furthermore, I would like to refer your Excellency's Government to the report of the Secretary-General to the Human Rights Council on the Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights (A/HRC/18/19), dated 21 July 2011, and recall its first recommendations: "States should ensure that all necessary measures are taken to prevent the occurrence of reprisals and intimidation; for example, States should publicly and unequivocally encourage people to cooperate with the United Nations in the field of human rights".

The scope of obligations and responsibility under the Convention, as identified by the Committee in its General Comment on article 2 of the Convention (CAT/C/GC/2), is on States parties as a whole, including its judiciary: "States bear international responsibility for the acts and omissions of their officials and others, including agents, (...), and others acting in official capacity or acting on behalf of the State, in conjunction with the State, under its direction or control, or otherwise under colour of law." Therefore, I would be grateful if these preoccupations of the Committee are also shared with all the authorities, civilian, military, administrative, judicial or others, involved in the above mentioned matter.

In view of the seriousness of the above mentioned allegations, related to the legitimate activities of Alkarama in Lebanon, as well as of its representative in the State party, Mr. Saadeddine Shatila, in providing information to the Committee against Torture in the context of procedures provided for under the Convention, I would appreciate, as a matter of urgency, to receive information on these allegations, as well as on measures taken by Your Excellency's Government to implement all the provisions of the Convention against Torture, and, especially with regard to Mr. Shatila, on article 13, *in fine*, of the Convention.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

  
Claudio Grossman  
Chairperson  
Committee against Torture