1982

ADC BACKGROUND PAPER # 6

CONDITIONS OF PALESTINIAN & LEBANESE PRISONERS HELD BY ISRAEL

TESTIMONIES BY DR CHRISTOPHER GIANNOU (CANADA)
DR STEINAR BERGE & OYVIND MØLLER (NORWAY)

On June 4, 1982, Israel began the bombing and invasion of Lebanon. In the ensuing weeks, according to the international Catholic relief agency CARITAS, 14,000 Lebanese and Palestinians have been killed, 20,000 have been wounded, and over 600,000 have been rendered homeless. The vast majority of these persons have been women, children and the elderly.

Relief efforts in Lebanon have been hampered because of the sheer magnitude of the destruction and because of Israeli efforts to obstruct aid. In a particularly inhumane manifestation of this obstruction, the occupying army has arrested doctors and medical assistants along with the Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners of war. Israel admits to holding 6,000 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners. Their identity, whereabouts, and conditions of internment, however, are unknown.

This publication, a compilation of testimonies by medical personnel who were arrested by the Israelis, provides insights into the conditions of the detention camps and the treatment accorded the Lebanese and Palestinian captives. Three medics -- Dr. Christopher Giannou of Canada and Dr. Steinar Berge and Oyvind Møller of Norway -- were among those arrested on June 13. For the next 36 hours, they were held in a schoolyard detention camp in Sidon. One June 15, they were taken briefly to another camp south of Sidon, and on the 16th they were transferred to Megido Prison in Israel. There they remained until June 20, when concerted pressure by the Canadian and Norwegian authorities finally secured the medics' release.

Dr. Giannou's testimony, which follows, was presented on July 13 before the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East (within the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs).