

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Lebanon: Amnesty International condemns attack on civilians**

Amnesty International condemns the gun attack on Monday morning carried out by unknown assailants on a bus carrying Syrian workers in northern Lebanon and calls for those responsible to be identified and brought to justice. One person - a 17-year-old labourer is reported to have been killed in the attack; several other civilians were injured.

As yet, it is unclear who carried out the attack, which occurred shortly after Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri returned from a two day official visit to Damascus, during which he held fence-mending talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The bus was attacked around dawn on Monday as it was travelling towards Syria on a major highway linking Tripoli and Akkar in northern Lebanon.

Syrian workers have been targeted previously. In particular, a number of Syrian workers were killed and others injured in apparent reprisals following the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic al-Hariri, father of the current Prime Minister, in February 2005. He, his bodyguards and civilian passers-by were killed in Beirut when a massive car bomb was detonated as he drove past. Many of his supporters and others accused the Syrian government of responsibility for the assassination, though the Syrian authorities have denied this.

Many Syrians continue to work in Lebanon, including many thousands who are unregistered and work as labourers, mostly in construction, often under hazardous conditions and for very low wages.

Amnesty International condemns all attacks on civilians.

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