
Alliance condemns use of military court for Australian terrorist detainee in Lebanon

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A peak legal body representing the rights of individuals, the Australian Lawyers Alliance, says the Australian government should repatriate Australian citizen, Imad Farouk Bsiso, from Lebanon.

Mr Bsiso, has just been was found guilty of terrorism charges by a military tribunal and sentenced to two years jail with hard labour. His detention began nine months ago.

The Alliance has concerns about the nature of Mr Bsiso's trial.

"Such military tribunals have been shown, in the past, to be patently unfair and cannot guarantee Mr Bsiso's right to a fair trial," Alliance director, Greg Barns said today.

"We call on the Australian Federal Government to negotiate with its Lebanese counterparts to enable Mr Bsiso to be able to return to Australia, Mr Barns said.

He said as far back as March 16, 2006, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) called for Lebanon to cease trying civilians before military tribunals.

"The ICJ noted that the trial of a civilian before a military tribunal is a grave violation of fundamental human rights," Mr Barns said.

"Furthermore, in 1997, the United Nations Human Rights Committee also called on Lebanon to stop prosecuting civilians before military jurisdictions."

Mr Barns said some Australian politicians and media commentators had rightly condemned the United States for seeking to use military tribunals to prosecute former Australian Guantanamo Bay detainees' David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib.

"Mr Bsiso is in exactly the same position and the Australian Government needs to make representations on his behalf," Mr Barns said.

For more details contact Australian Lawyers Alliance public affairs manager, Mandy Wyer: 02 92587737 or Alliance director, Greg Barns on 0419 691 846.