

WASTE TRADE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN – TOXIC ATTACK AGAINST LEBANON

CASE ONE: TOXICS FROM ITALY

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This report is dedicated to all victims of the toxic attack against the people of Lebanon.

It is also dedicated to the Lebanese scientists Dr Pierre Malychef, Dr Milad Jerjoui and Dr Wilson Rizk. They risked their lives while investigating dumping sites and taking samples in the middle of the war, and they persevered for many years in their work to prevent a scandal from being forgotten.

This report was drawn up with the invaluable help of the scientists mentioned above, committed journalists, justice officials and environmental activists as well as with the support of government and industrial sources in Lebanon, who wished to remain anonymous.

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Attention editors: You can order Beta-SP shots and colour photographs of this toxic waste scandal from Fouad Hamdan, Mario Damato or Greenpeace Communications in Amsterdam, T 0031-20-5236222, F 0031-20-5236200.

I. INTRODUCTION

Greenpeace is an international organization dedicated to protecting the Earth and all the life it supports. Greenpeace works to stop the threat of nuclear war, to protect the environment from nuclear and toxic pollution, and to halt the slaughter of whales, dolphins and other endangered animals.

Greenpeace has offices in 32 countries. It is not affiliated to any political party or politicians. It is financed exclusively by contributions from over four million supporters worldwide.

In 1987, Greenpeace launched the campaign against the trade of waste in response to the alarming trend of industrialized countries shipping their toxic wastes to developing nations. The Greenpeace "Waste Trade Inventory 1990" reveals that waste traders have attempted to ship more than 163 million tons of wastes around the world since 1986. They succeeded in exporting about 10 million tons of toxic waste that often ended up in developing nations. The total number of known shipments reveals just the "tip of the iceberg", the actual figure is probably much higher.

In the early 1990s, about 98 per cent of the estimated 400 million tons of waste produced all over the world each year come from OECD countries, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Most schemes cynically claim some sort of "recycling", "reuse" or "humanitarian benefit". The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a forum of western industrialized countries to coordinate their economic and social policies.

The transfer of waste from wealthy industrialized countries to developing nations is a practice which is inhuman and unjust. It means nothing less than exporting a problem out of one's own country and dumping it on another country's population, which in most cases is less equipped or even not equipped at all to deal with it. The export of waste is one of the most scandalous ways in which industry tries to evade its responsibility.

Greenpeace activists have lobbied for a total ban on the trade of all wastes that pollute the environment. The result was a victory at the Conference of the Parties (i.e. member countries) to the Basel Convention in Geneva on March 25, 1994.

The Basel Convention agreed to

- * immediately prohibit all transboundary movements of hazardous waste destined for final disposal from OECD to non-OECD States

- * phase out by 31 December 1997, and prohibit as of that date, all transboundary movements of hazardous wastes destined for recycling or recovery operations from OECD to non-OECD countries

The agreement eliminates the loophole of exporting waste under the guise of recycling, thus beginning a new era of promoting waste prevention and clean production. It will force rich countries to take full responsibility for their waste production problem with no legal possibility to dump it on their neighbours. Greenpeace helped to achieve this.

The Basel Convention constitutes a landmark in international affairs. For once, the rich countries did not hold the political cards in their hands.

The Basel waste export ban was preceded by the unanimous call by the Mediterranean countries made at the 8th Ordinary Meeting of the Barcelona Convention in October 1993 *"to actively support the total prohibition of the export and transfer of hazardous wastes to developing countries"*. The countries also called for the adoption of a binding protocol under the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

In previous Greenpeace reports, evidence has been compiled that waste traders have been active in the Mediterranean region. Albania, Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey have become victims of illegal waste trade.

In 1994, Greenpeace succeeded in forcing Germany to return 1,500 tonnes of toxic waste from Romania and 790 tonnes of toxics from Albania.

Toxic waste trade exports will not be officially prohibited until December 31, 1997. Greenpeace warns industrial countries that our vigilance will not waver before and after that date.

Greenpeace is committed to uncover and expose the full extent of international waste trade, and to put an end to it once and for all. Our waste trade campaigners act as reporters. They use facts proved in law-courts, official reports and memos, news stories and accounts published by news agencies and media, investigations of waste traders, and conversations with officials, local ecological groups and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and journalists.

The following Greenpeace report aims at serving the goal of prohibiting regional and global waste trade. Its intention is to help grass-roots organisations, environment groups, journalists, environment officials, the police, the courts and politicians in their efforts to stop the dirty business of waste trade.

II. SUMMARY

In 1987, 15,800 barrels of different sizes and 20 containers of toxic waste were illegally exported from Italy to Lebanon. Gunmen of the right-wing militia "Lebanese Forces" covered up the operation, bribed by a share of money paid by an Italian company to Lebanese traders. Lebanese authorities did not take notice of the imported waste because the country was ravaged by a civil war from 1975 until 1990.

After a public outcry when the scandal leaked to the public in 1988, the Italian government promised to return all the toxics. But only some 5,500 barrels were loaded in four ships at Beirut Port in 1988/89. The operation was supervised by Italian experts and the militia "Lebanese Forces".

More than 10,000 barrels and the contents of several containers remained in Lebanon or were dumped along its shores. The government in Rome thus deceived Lebanese and Italian public opinion when it said that it had returned all toxic waste sent from Italy to Lebanon in 1987.

Authorities in Italy have been claiming since 1989 that all the waste had been returned on board one ship, the "Jolly Rosso". Italian Ambassador in Lebanon, Mr Carlo Calia, repeated in 1995 the claim that there was no toxic waste from Italy left in Lebanon.

Greenpeace learnt that three other ships that had been loaded with Italian waste in Beirut port never arrived in Italy, suggesting that they dumped their deadly cargo in the Mediterranean Sea.

A United Nations General Assembly report to the Secretary-General on "Illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes", dated July 18, 1989 said: *"In July 1988, in Beirut harbour, a cargo vessel flying the flag of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was loaded with barrels containing exhaust gases with a noxious odour. Close by was another ship flying an unidentifiable flag, which undertook to transfer the said barrels onto a third ship, the "Yvonne A", bearing the Sri Lankan flag. According to available information, the "Yvonne A" was to be sunk with its cargo in the Mediterranean after leaving the harbour."*

A radio journalist from Famagusta, Cyprus, told Greenpeace in 1989 that he had intercepted a radio conversation between the captain of an unidentified ship that had left Beirut port and the "Voriais Sporadais". The two captains were discussing the best place to dump waste. Their position was between 40 and 50 kilometres east of Famagusta, between Lebanon and Cyprus.

In Lebanon, the remaining waste was used as fertilizer, pesticide or as so-called raw material to produce paints for furniture and polyurethane for the production of foam mattresses. Some factories were quite unhappy with the quality of the "raw materials" and threw them in household dumps, in the sewage system or in valleys.

In some cases, barrels were emptied and sold to people to store petrol, water or food. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) said in 1990 that barrels "*were emptied of their toxic industrial content to be reused by people... They were cleaned with detergents and even painted to hide their origin... They were sold to be reused, out of ignorance, to store food, to be used as waste bins in restaurants and snack bars and ... to store drinking water*".

Many barrels were burned in open air. Others were dumped in the sea or in the Kisrwan mountains east of Beirut. As a consequence, soil in many areas were contaminated, especially in the Shnanir quarry east of Junieh, the storage site of thousands of toxic waste barrels from Italy. Also, ground water is endangered by the toxics because the Kisrwan mountains are a region of aquifers.

Laboratory analysis revealed that the deadly shipment from Italy had contained a cocktail of toxics. Lebanese and Italian scientists established that the toxic waste consisted of: the explosive substance nitrocellulose; outdated adhesives, organophosphate pesticides, solvents as well as outdated medication; oil residues and highly toxic heavy metals like lead, mercury and cadmium; arsenic; chlorinated substances; PCBs, and other substances. Hundreds of barrels contained extremely high concentrations of the lethal substance dioxin.

In November 1994, Greenpeace activists took samples from waste barrels that had been found in the Kisrwan mountains and were then stored in two containers at Beirut Port. Greenpeace also sampled in May 1995 two spots in the Shnanir quarry, the main storage site of the barrels and containers. The tests were carried out by the Greenpeace laboratory at Exeter University in England. They showed that the waste contained a cocktail of toxic substances similar to the ones imported from Italy in 1987. The two containers were shipped in July 1995 to France for incineration.

In October 1995, Greenpeace and the Lebanese Environment Minister Pierre Pharaon agreed to "cooperate" to solve the toxic waste issue. This came after weeks of confrontation between both sides that culminated in forcing out the Greenpeace ship "Altair" out of Beirut Port on September 1, 1995. On October 8, Greenpeace showed Mr Pharaon the two spots in the Shnanir quarry proved by Greenpeace tests as contaminated. Mr Pharaon promised to decontaminate them as soon as possible.

But the "cooperation" lasted only eight months. In May 1996, the Greenpeace Mediterranean Office had no choice but to end the "cooperation" with Mr. Pharaon because he refused to solve the problem in a serious way. He refused to decontaminate the quarry of Shnanir east of Junieh and rejected to publish all details related to the 15,800 barrels and 20 containers imported from Italy. And he refused to inform public opinion about his activities to solve this issue. In the meantime a house for cows was constructed on one contaminated spot while the other was covered under rocks. Mr. Pharaon and the Lebanese government are responsible for any future contamination of ground waters and for any future poisoning.

In May 1996, Greenpeace revealed that the Lebanese authorities shipped on April 4, 1996, secretly to France 12 containers with 77 tons of collected toxic waste and contaminated land for planned incineration at the company Tredi. The toxics were shipped on board the vessel "Varna" from Beirut to Marseilles. The operation took place secretly and authorities reluctantly confirmed to Greenpeace the shipment. Most of the collected waste is part of the 1987 Italian deal, Lebanese officials told Greenpeace. The Lebanese tax payers financed this operation - and not the Italian government.

Today we can say that only a small amount of the toxic waste from Italy had been retrieved and only a few polluted areas decontaminated. There is still a lot to do. Greenpeace also opposed the incineration of the toxic waste in France for environmental considerations. They should be recycled if technically possible or stored safely.

Greenpeace condemned the policy of the Lebanese government to carry out the collection and decontamination operations secretly without any media or other independent control. By doing so Mr. Pharaon told past and future toxic waste traders that the Lebanese government will actively silence every criticism against such crimes. Public opinion has a right to know about every detail so that such

an ecological crime is not repeated. As a matter of principle, Lebanese authorities should have returned to Italy the toxics proved to be part of the 1987 deal.

Greenpeace asked Mr Pharaon why the Lebanese government is not officially demanding from Italy to fulfill its 1988 promise and return all the waste. He answered that the European Union, including Italy, is giving Lebanon millions in grants and aid and therefore it would be inappropriate to embarrass Italy with the toxic waste.

Greenpeace demands from the Italian government to fulfill its 1988 promise and return all the toxic waste that can be found in Lebanon. It has a moral obligation to organize and finance a search for the remaining waste. Contaminated land in Lebanon must be rehabilitated and Lebanese citizens indemnified if proved victims of the waste.

Greenpeace urges the Lebanese government to officially demand that Italy fulfill its 1988 promise. As soon as possible, the Lebanese government must order a search for all the barrels sold in Lebanon for reuse and see to it that their content, if still existing, is confiscated and secured. The waste barrels from Italy are ecological time bombs in Lebanon's soil and waters, and a threat to the population.

Waste trade and dumping in the Mediterranean region is a continuing epidemic. Countries of the region must adopt without further delay the waste trade protocol of the Barcelona Convention which will ban the trade in hazardous wastes from European Union (EU) countries to non-EU countries.

III. TOXIC ATTACK FROM ITALY

1. FOR A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS

The deadly cargo, officially declared as "raw material", was quickly unloaded at Beirut Port and then stored at several places in the Christian enclave east of Beirut. In this summer of 1987, Lebanese authorities did not take notice of the toxic attack because Beirut Port and the enclave east of Beirut were under the control of the right-wing militia "Lebanese Forces". Lebanon was in a state of war from April 1975 till October 1990.

The militia allowed the Czechoslovakian ship "Radhost" to enter Beirut Port on September 21, 1987. Officially, the importer of the ship's cargo was the company "Adonis Productions Engineering" in Beirut which, however, only existed on paper. The real name of the criminal importer company was "Arman Nassar Shipping", owned by Arman Nassar. He had hammered out a lucrative deal with the Italian firm "Jelly Wax" in the Milan area (Via Romagna, 19-21, Zona Industria n. 2, 20090 Opera (MI), T ++39-2-57601022, F ++39-2-57600151, Director General Renato Pent).

A document signed by Roger Michel Haddad, an employee working on behalf of "Arman Nassar Shipping", cynically declared the waste as "raw material for industrial production and for agriculture", thus disguising the toxics.

The waste was in about "15,800 barrels and 20 containers", the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) said in a report written on November 29, 1990.

The "Radhost" brought its deadly cargo to Beirut in several shipments. "Jelly Wax" first shipped the waste to Venezuela, but authorities rejected it. The barrels were then diverted to Lebanon.

The deal became public when on February 18, 1988, a lawyer action for "Ecolife SAS" asked Lebanon's consul in Milan, Adib Alameddine, to confirm the authenticity of a document issued by "Adonis Productions Engineering" to "Jelly Wax". This document claimed that "all the 2,411.318 tons of industrial waste unloaded from the ship Radhost were destroyed as of October 10, 1987. Parts of the load were turned into ashes and parts of it were thrown in the sewage system".

The document had a stamp saying "Adonis Productions Engineering, Riad al-Solh St. - Sehnavi Blg. 36/1, P.O. Box 33-216 - Beirut" and a signature that cannot be deciphered. It also had an official stamp with a

cedar that looked like a pine tree and the words, with spelling mistakes, "Republiche libanes 1987". All official Lebanese stamps have a cedar design (see appendix). Consul Alameddine realized the document was forged, and he alarmed the Lebanese Foreign Ministry on March 22, 1988.

A Lebanese Army Secret Service "Report About Environment Crimes (Waste Barrels)" gives details about the early phase of the deal. It was written on January 30, 1995, and leaked to the Lebanese media a month later (see appendix). The report reveals that a total of 27 persons in Lebanon were involved in the scandal, among them nine who were employees at the Lebanese Environment Ministry in early 1995. Two of them acted as advisors to Environment Minister Samir Moqbel: Dr César Nasr and Dr Jamil Rima.

Another person said to be involved in the deal is the former "Lebanese Forces" member Tamir Mussa, who had worked for the militia's "Social Fund", which financed social activities. Mussa was in 1995 an advisor to the Lebanese Finance Minister, Mr Fouad al-Seniara.

"In order to secure the entry of the ship into the port's fifth basin, the approval of the militia controlling the site was necessary. Arman Nassar, his partner, Antoine al-Amm, and his unofficial partner, Jihad Saade, contacted the National Fund of the now disbanded Lebanese Forces, represented by the Fund's head, George Antun, and his employee, Tamir Mussa. Both promised to cover up the operation and help the entry of the waste barrels," the army report said.

When the Lebanese media uncovered the deal in June 1988, the "Lebanese Forces" tried to deceive public opinion and cover up its direct involvement in the case. Antoine al-Amm and George Antun *"agreed to produce forged laboratory reports to shut up the press"*, the army report said. *"These reports were made with the help of the Fund's so-called Customs Unit at the Industrial Laboratory and the Hospital Lamartine. And in an another attempt to cover up the case they agreed ... to fine Roger Haddad 30,000 dollars because of his false statement on the quality of the cargo..."*

"On June 20, 1988, Samir Tawile, a former member of the dissolved Lebanese Forces, informed Arman Nassar that the media had uncovered the deal and not the Lebanese Forces. At an early stage, the Lebanese Forces defended the deal and took part in attempts to stress, with the help of laboratory tests, that the waste is fine," the army report added.

Regarding the amount of money paid by "Jelly Wax" to their Lebanese partners, Judge George Ghantous in Beirut said "Jelly Wax" agreed to pay "Arman Nassar Shipping" 22 million dollars (al-Mostaqbal, July 1988, al-Wasat February 13, 1995). The leftist media and radios stated that the "Lebanese Forces" received 12 million dollars from Arman Nassar (AP, November 14, 1988). Other sources said 12 million dollars were paid to the importer, who gave a large sum to the "National Fund" of the "Lebanese Forces" militia. State prosecutor Joseph Fraiha said in 1988 that the Lebanese shipping company involved had received 500,000 dollars from "Jelly Wax". (SZ/dpa June 14, 1988)

The Lebanese Army report said: *"50 per cent of the sum would be paid when the cargo was delivered and the remaining 50 per cent after receiving the papers declaring that the waste had been destroyed or dumped in a proper way."* The army report did not say how much money was paid.

Another Lebanese company, "Contracting Commercial Services" (CCS), was said to be also involved in the scandal. In 1995, Lebanese parliamentary deputy Samir Aoun revealed details about CCS. He said that an Italian company had offered a Lebanese called Roy Khoury to import toxic waste from Italy. Khoury refused. But Jihad Saade, the man mentioned in the army report as having been involved in the "Jelly Wax" scandal, learnt about this offer. Saade informed Tamir Mussa of the militia's "National Fund" about this offer. Mussa then arranged a meeting between Saade and George Antun, the head of the militia's fund, according to MP Aoun.

Antun and Saade agreed to accept the Italian offer. Saade then set up CCS to import industrial waste and registered it at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The registration certificate of CCS, No. 13935, dated December 4, 1987, reads: *"The Chamber of Industry and Commerce certifies that CCS (...) deals in commerce in general, import-export, and mainly in the commerce of chemical products and industrial waste"* (see appendix).

The Italian offer involved about 300,000 tons of waste. The Italians had offered 250 dollars per ton, meaning a total of 75 million dollars. According to MP Samir Aoun, Antun and Saade agreed that 80 per cent of the cash should go to the "National Fund" via Tamir Mussa, 10 per cent to Saade and 10 per cent to Khoury.

But the deal was cancelled because the waste scandal involving "Nassar Shipping" and the "Lebanese Forces" became public. Nevertheless, CCS was then asked by the militia to dump some of the barrels imported by "Nassar Shipping" at the quarry of Shnanir. Jihad Saade personally supervised this operation. Workers emptied barrels and dumped them in a hole; the empty barrels were then sold for 5 dollars each. Saade also bought a piece of land in Laqluq in the Kisrwan mountains to dump more barrels there if needed, Aoun charged.

The MP said he could prove all his charges with documents he had, and he said that he gave all his information to Lebanese authorities (an-Nahar March 7 and 8, 1995; as-Safir March 8, 1995).

Two of the empty barrels sold by Saade could have found their way into the home of Mr Soleiman Ibrahim and his family in the village of Takrit, Akkar area. Ibrahim told reporters from the Lebanese daily an-Nahar that he had bought two barrels in 1990. He had washed them and been using them since then to store petrol for heating. The an-Nahar reporter deciphered on the two barrels: "Toluol - Diisconate de tolyene" (an-Nahar March 6, 1995). The daily said people in Lebanon used empty barrels to store water, grains and petrol for heating.

2. THE MERCHANTS OF DEATH

When news broke about the toxics from Italy, authorities in Lebanon opened an investigation. Prosecutor Dr. Munif Hamdan wrote about the results of his investigation in an official report to the Lebanese government on June 26, 1988 (see appendix). He said that Antoine Milad Kamid (born 1941), Roger Michel Haddad (b. 1948), Sami Bulos Nassar (b. 1943), Henri Shikreddine Abdallah (b. 1927), Antoine Asaad al-Amm (b. 1947) and Dumit Yussef Kamid (b. 1951) had been detained and interrogated.

The investigation showed that these six:

- * *together with other people illegally imported harmful and toxic waste to Lebanon,*
- * *forged documents,*
- * *forged sampling reports,*
- * *forged official documents and stamps,*
- * *sold parts of the shipment although they knew that it spread illnesses and polluted the environment*
- * *deliberately risked the threat of mass poisoning of citizens, or even a mass killing.*

The prosecutor spoke of "an environmental disaster", and he said the accused were personally responsible for importing the deadly cargo from Italy. He demanded that the six accused be sentenced to death for attempting mass killing. "We also demand that Arman Nassar, who is on the run, be arrested," he wrote.

"Italian companies are partly responsible... The presidents and executive board members of Jelly Wax and Ecolife must be brought to Lebanon for interrogation. Arrest warrants should be issued against them. The two companies should be made liable for the danger they have done to the Lebanese," he added.

Prosecutor Hamdan made his "judicial decision" after having studied reports from scientists as well as an article in the Lebanese weekly "Magazine", dated April 4, 1988, which stated: "Two boats were allowed, according to industrial sources, to dump waste containing lead off the Lebanese coast, one boat off Tripoli and one boat off Jieh". Many barrels from Italy contained highly toxic heavy metals like lead.

In the wake of this scandal, the Lebanese government issued a law banning any form of pollution (No. 64/88, dated August 18, 1988). Punishment could be a jail sentence or even death penalty. However, despite the charges raised against the six accused, they were released on bail after a short detention. No legal steps were taken against them. During this final stage of the civil war, Lebanon fell into a state of

anarchy. Fighting flared up again between different factions, mainly in the area controlled by the "Lebanese Forces". During this period of anarchy, the police and judiciary in Lebanon were in no position to enforce law.

After the end of the war, the case was reopened and an investigation took place. Prosecutor Labib Zwein then wrote a "judicial decision" dated March 2, 1992. Mr. Zwein decided that the seven persons directly involved in the case could not face trial because their acts were crimes of war covered by the general amnesty law of July 8, 1991. But Arman Nassar and the legal representative of "Jelly Wax" in Lebanon, Paul Sagio, were to be charged only for committing a "minor offence". This report was leaked to the Lebanese media in 1994 (see appendix).

3. DEADLY TOXICS

In 1988, authorities in Lebanon set up a committee of scientists to take samples and to determine the quality of the waste. Committee members Dr. Milad Jarjoui, Dr. Wilson Rizk and Dr. Pierre Malychef were assisted by Italian expert Dr. Gustavo Umberto Fortunati. Under public pressure to get rid of the waste, the "Lebanese Forces" allowed these experts to take samples only from a limited number of barrels.

In a report published in 1994, the Lebanese scientists confirmed that a total of "15,800 barrels and 20 containers" had entered Lebanon in 1987.

In an earlier report, written on July 15, 1988, the scientists stated that the waste was "100 per cent toxic" (see appendix). It consisted of outdated solvents and paints, waste from chemical laboratories, outdated medication, hydrocarbons (oil residues), heavy metals, and many other substances. The samples they took contained:

"Nitrocellulose or fulmicoton (a highly explosive substance), polyurethane, cynures, heavy metal cyanides (cadmium Cd(CN)₂, mercury Hg(CN)₂, silver AgCN), sand mixed with dioxins (40 parts per million) that could be part of the contaminated sand from Seveso, dicofol (a defoliant?), tricolol, herbicides, styrene, chlorure de méthylene, isocyanate de methyle (pesticide), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and chromate de plomb."

The team said the waste they could reach - the barrels were on top of each other - was not radioactive. But they could not measure beta and alpha rays. They asked that the waste be collected carefully and stored in a safe way before being shipped out of the country because Lebanon did not have any capacity to treat such waste.

"The Italian expert told us that the barrels contain toxic industrial waste that is outdated and polluting. It cannot be used in any way," the report read. In 1988, Lebanese Health Minister Joseph al-Hashem met with the Lebanese scientists and Dr. Fortunati. The scientists said: *"We all agreed that the waste is highly toxic and could not be used under any circumstances."*

Malychef reported that the barrels they saw were all either marked with an "R" (Italian: Rifiuti, meaning waste) or with a diamond with the word "poison", along with the recommendations that the substances should under no circumstances be inhaled. All containers were marked with the symbol "Danger - Do not swallow".

The list of toxics written by the Lebanese scientists:

CHEMICALS	TONNES	BARRELS	PERCENTAGE
1. Outdated varnish, mainly nitrocellulose, an explosive substance.	506.92	2,535	21.3
2. Waste from plastics, poisonous industrial	336.86	1,685	14,2

substances, polyurethanes, isocyanates, polyals. It is to be noted that isocyanates de methyl caused the death of thousands of people in Bophal, India, in 1984.

3. Outdated and toxic adhesives banned in Italy and Europe, harmful to children	257.04	1,285	10.09
4. Outdated solvents used to clean machines (xylene)	218.47	1,093	9.2
5. Waste from research laboratories. Very dangerous new medication that proved useless, outdated medication	186.35	932	7.8
6. Hydrocarbons: waste of petrol products from oil tanks; carcinogenic	148.49	743	6.2
7. Chemical waste from the production of medication, outdated medication, outdated sterilization products	118.77	594	5.2
8. Waste from electro-production, highly toxic cyanides, salts and heavy metal cyanides AgCN, Hg(CN) ₂ , Cd(CN) ₂	102.50	513	4.3
9. Waste from lubricants, toxic and outdated paints containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)	60.91	305	2.5
10. Sand used to clean industrial waste contaminated with highly toxic dioxin. The scientist's report stated the sand "could have been used in Seveso".	59.14	296	2.5
11. Sand contaminated with dioxin "that could have the similar quality as contaminated sand that was removed from the Italian city of Seveso, that was hit by a disaster in 1976 when a factory exploded"	56.68	285	2.4
12. Waste from the production of highly toxic organophosphoric	48.92	245	2.0

pesticides, dicofol, tricofol (containing 40 parts of dioxin per million parts); barrels containing tricofol also contained a mixture of pesticides. dicofol 2.4 D (acide 2.4 dichloro-phénoxy acétique), etc.

13. Wastes from acids used to remove heavy metals like cadmium and lead.	47.58	238	2.0
14. Lubricants contaminated with dioxin and PCBs	226.98	1,135	9.5
TOTAL of waste inspected:	2375.60	11,884	

The contents of the remaining barrels could not be established. Italian expert Dr Gustavo Umberto Fortunati said that "many more" barrels existed, in addition to the ones examined by the Lebanese scientists. He stressed that the Lebanese government had to find them (L'Orient-Le Jour June 22, 1988).

The Lebanese scientists also quoted the Italian expert, Dr. Fortunati, as saying that all barrels must be stored properly, and they must be transported back to Italy. Aquifers as well as ground water should be monitored, samples should taken and tested.

On June 23, 1988, former Lebanese ambassador to Lebanon, Mr Antonio Mancini, informed Lebanese Health Minister Joseph al-Hashem about the content of the toxics. At first glance Mancini's list with 14 points seems to be similar to the one written by the Lebanese scientists. But the ambassador's list fails to mention the sand contaminated with dioxin, the organophosphate pesticides and other highly toxic heavy metals. Mancini even claims in his letter that the waste did not include "dioxin, which is not allowed to be produced in Italy, and explosive substances" (see appendix). (It is to be noted that dioxins are never produced. Dioxins are by-products of the incineration of chlorine or products containing chlorine, such as the plastic PVC.) Mancini's list mentions only the quantity of waste in tons and the percentage. The number of barrels is missing.

The toxics are also mentioned in the Lebanese Army Report: "All the industrial waste is 100 per cent polluted and cannot be used under any circumstances. The Italian expert agreed that the substance dicofol contained 40 parts of dioxin per million parts of dicofol," the army report stated. Moreover, the Lebanese Army made the accusation that the "Lebanese Forces" had put aside many chemicals that could be used for the production of chemical weapons. These barrels, which were stored in Shnanir, had "disappeared". "It was learned that the disbanded Lebanese Forces kept chemical weapons."

Another source giving details about the content of the toxics from Italy was a letter written by the former head of Lebanon's "Council for Development and Reconstruction" (CDR), Malek Salam on June 20, 1990. In this letter to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representative in Beirut, George Abu Jawdeh, Salem responds to a UNDP proposal for assistance in the field of "hazardous wastes: clean-up in Lebanon". Salem writes about a mixture of toxic waste in "15,800 barrels and 20 containers" containing:

- "Pesticides: dicofol, tricofol
- Halogenated cyanides of heavy metals: arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd), copper (Co), mercury (Hg), lead (Pb), Ta, Se
- Polluted organic solvents: toluene, xylene, polyol, Polyuritan, inks, asbestos
- Carcenogenic compounds: plyphlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), plyphlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxin, plyphcyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), halogenated phenolic compounds,
- Rejected and contaminated pharmaceuticals, biocides and plyto-pharmaceutical compounds
- Wastes of an explosive nature, nitrocellulose
- Varnish, paints containing heavy metals
- Waste of chemical weapons

- *Contaminated and disposed protective gears*"

(The quotes from the letter are in original English, including spelling mistakes.)

The weekly Revue du Liban (July 30, 1988) printed a picture showing one of the containers from Italy at Beirut Port with boots, gloves and clothing *"apparently abandoned after an important decontamination action"* (see appendix). This was confirmed by Dr Malychef, who gave Greenpeace this picture he had taken in 1988.

In 1988, Lebanese scientist Dr Malychef said that the deadly cargo from Italy contained:

* *Nitrocellulose, an explosive.*

* *Acidic substances and caustic salts from galvanoplastic baths with a high content of cyanide and heavy metals*

* *Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which give off dioxins when burned*

* *Oil residues similar to pyralenes in transformers or cooling circuits*

* *Hundreds of barrels of styrene, methyl styrene, mixtures of toluene xylene, polyol and methyl chloride solvents, anionic detergents, all contaminated and impure*

* *Some containers filled with absorbent products used in decontamination operations, e.g. calcium silicates, crushed pumice stone, coal in powder form, asbestos*

* *Dozens of pairs of boots and gloves, caps, overalls, picks, hammers, etc., all looking very dirty and contaminated, abandoned by men who were working, as we suppose, in an environment which was either radioactive or saturated with dioxins or other equally dangerous products"*

Malychef confirmed in 1995 this statement to Greenpeace.

The International Maritime Organisations (IMO) also mentioned a list of toxics in 1988 (see appendix).

Selim Hoss, then Lebanese Prime Minister, told parliament in July 1998 that the waste from Italy was "very toxic" and "endangered Lebanon", according to a World Health Organisation (WHO) report written by Mr Ahmad Hamza.

All reports and information about the toxicity of the waste contradicted early statements by the "Lebanese Forces". César Nasr, who in 1988 was the head of the militia's so-called foreign department, claimed that "90 per cent of the chemicals could be recycled". The "Lebanese Forces" also claimed that the French "Institute Pasteur" said the chemicals were not toxic.

4. STORED, SOLD, BURNED, DUMPED

Greenpeace gathered information about the fate of the toxic waste that was not returned to Italy. This information is based on reports written by Lebanese authorities (judicial reports in 1988 and in 1992, Lebanese Army report 1995), ecological groups, scientists and press reports:

In the "judicial decision" of state prosecutor Labib Zwein on March 2, 1992, it can be read that some of the waste was sold and reused. It also says that barrels were dumped and burned.

Lebanese scientist Dr Wilson Rizk said some 10,000 barrels remained in Lebanon's soil and waters. Some of the barrels were emptied and used by households to store food or water (An-Nahar February 11, 1995).

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) said in 1990 that barrels *"were emptied of their toxic industrial content to be reused by people... They were cleaned with detergents and even painted to hide their origin... They were sold to be reused, out of ignorance, to store food, to be used as waste bins in restaurants and snack bars and ... to store drinking water"*.

Some of the toxic waste was used as fertilizers, pesticides or as raw material to produce paints for furniture. Polyurethane was used for the production of foam mattresses. Some factories were quite

unhappy with the quality of the "raw materials" and threw them in household dumps, in valleys or simply burned them in open air.

The army report said: *"Some of the waste was used in industry, apparently with negative results. Many of these industrialists then tried to get rid of it by any means."*

Dr. Malychef: *"Barrels, rehabilitated by analysis reports ... were resold at highly competitive prices to a number of factories not very particular about the excellence of their products... In May 1988, a number of barrels were knocked over at a retail sale in the open air at Shnanir depot, emitting a suffocating odour. (Revue Du Liban, July 30,1988)"*

Sami Nassar, the owner of a steel factory, told the daily an-Nahar (February 10, 1995) that he had bought "raw material" from Antoine al-Amm, but had returned it when he realized that the quality was bad.

Dr Malychef said that methyl isocyanate compounds were wrongly recommended for the perfume industry. *"This is in fact a poison which, when inhaled, may lead to an extremely high level of hypertension. At Union Carbide (Bophal/India) the cooling system of a vat broke down, the same product evaporated and killed thousands of people. I almost learnt this the hard way when I inhaled vapour from a contaminated barrel of a mixture of polyurethane and isocyanate which depolymerized,"* he said (Revue du Liban, July 30, 1988).

FORMER STORAGE SITES:(sources of information in brackets)

* Factories and former storage places in **Rmail, Adma, Yasuh al-Malik, Jeita, quarry of Shnanir** (Lebanese scientists Dr. Wilson Rizk, Dr. Milad Jarjhoui, Dr. Pierre Malychef/Green Line)

* 4,000 barrels at the storage place of Henri Abdallah in **Zuk Mosbeh** (army report). On February 9, 1995, the daily an-Nahar published a bill sent by *"Euro-Mediterranean Shipping Services SARL to Mr. Dumit Kamid"* regarding *"storing 4,000 barrels, about 800 tonnes of different chemical and industrial substances stored at our storage site in Zuk Mosbeh on October 10, 1987"*. A Letter of Intent between Dumit Kamid and this company, dated October 10,1987, also confirms the deal (see appendix).

It is to be noted that a factory for the production of "polyurethane foam and mattresses, sponges and nylon bags" is owned by a Mr Henri Abdallah in Zuk Mosbeh, registration number at Baabda: 2997 (see appendix).

* 800 barrels in **Yasuh al-Malik** (scientists' report/Green Line)

* 2,000 barrels at the storage place of Samir Rokaz Nassar in **Mahallat Nahr al-Maut** (army report and report of Prosecutor Dr. Munif Hamdan)

* Barrels stored or dumped **between the Zuk power plant and Nahr al-Kalb** (Dr. Milad Jarjoui in al-Wasat, February 13, 1995)

* 7,000 barrels and 18 containers stored in **Shnanir**, later partly dumped, sold, burned, or transported to Beirut Port for planned shipment to Italy

* Barrels with chemicals that could be used for the production of chemical weapons and that were stored in Shnanir have "disappeared", and hidden at an unknown place by the Lebanese Forces (army report)

DUMPING SITES:

* CDR President Salem wrote to the UNDP that barrels were dumped in: **Beirut area and harbour (berth No. 5), Qarantina, Burj Hammud, Daura and its sea shores. Kisrwan area: Shnanir, Sahel Alma, Zuk Mosbeh, Jeita, Nahr al-Kalb and Zuk sea shores.** Pictures given in 1995 to Greenpeace show that the reloading operation in 1988 was done in a way that contaminated an area in the port.

* 500 barrels buried under sand and rocks in the **quarry of Shnanir between Shnanir and Sahel Alma** (Jarjoui in al-Wasat February 13, 1995). The Army report mentions "many barrels burned and dumped" in Shnanir under the supervision of "Lebanese Forces" member George Kassab, a former MP. Greenpeace sample test results confirm in 1995 that the quarry is highly contaminated by a cocktail of toxics.

* 1,600 barrels destroyed in **Qarantina** (an-Nahar January 30, 1995/Army Report)

* 2,000 barrels burned in the **waste dump of Burj Hammud**, east of Beirut (army report)

* A number of barrels in the **Normandie waste dump, Beirut coastline** (Judicial Decision of Mr. Labib Zwein)

* Sami Bulos Nassar, owner of "**Nassar Steel Factory**" in **Rumieh, east of Beirut**, melted many barrels "to eradicate signs of the crime", according to the army report (An-Nahar February 10, 1995).

* Waste found in rusty barrels in **Nahayleh and al-Miiri areas in Uyun al-Siman, Kisrwan mountains** (Al-Hayat September 17, 1994; as-Safir September 23, 1994). The contents were put in new barrels and then stored in a container at Beirut Port. Greenpeace later analysed parts of them, and results showed that this toxic waste could be part of the Italian deal (see below and see appendix).

* One barrel found in Shnanir. A team of German scientists invited to Lebanon by the Environment Ministry took a sample from it and tested it, but results were never published. Greenpeace sample test results showed that this barrel contained highly toxic substances like DDT.

POSSIBLE SITES OF DUMPED WASTE:

* In 1995, Lebanese Prosecutor Said Mirza ordered the testing of samples from 72 barrels found in Antelias and 6 barrels found in Bteghrin (an-Nahar 7.2.1995). The 72 barrels in Antelias, east of Beirut, were dumped adjacent to a "AG Liban" gasoline station, 200 metres from the Environment Ministry. An-Nahar quoted "reliable scientific sources" as saying that Roger Haddad is the owner of these barrels (An-Nahar February 20, 1995).

* In early March 1995, Abdallah Zakhia from the Environment Committee of the "Lebanese Association for Human Rights" informed the authorities about 11 barrels dumped in the Bilat Jbeil area near an old factory. Ten days later the barrels were still there (as-Safir March 8, 1995).

* Barrels found in Halat near Mar-Yussef Church (an-Nahar January 30, 1995)

* Two empty barrels found at Mr Soleiman Ibrahim and his family's house in the village of Takrit, Akkar area. Ibrahim said he had bought the two barrels in 1990, washed them and used them to store petrol for heating. On the two barrels a reporter deciphered "Toluol -Diisconate de tolyene" (an-Nahar March 6, 1995).

* Twelve barrels found in Bshililli, Jbeil area (an-Nahar March 9, 1995)

* Eleven barrels found in Wata Alban near the village of Blat, Jbail area. They were all rusty. On one was written: "Pliabrae - significant component - tricresyl phosphate - substances nosives par injection ou par contact avec la peau". Police took samples and gave them to the Environment Ministry (an-Nahar March 10, 1995).

* 35 barrels found in Abu Ali River near Tripoli (An-Nahar February 3, 1995)

ACCIDENT:

In June 1988, an accident happened when the "Lebanese Forces" were transporting the waste. Toxic waste fell from a truck on the road near Ghazir, state prosecutor Joseph Fraiha said. The ground was contaminated. (SZ/dpa June 14, 1988)

POSSIBLE VICTIMS:

The following information about possible victims of the toxic waste from Italy was available to Greenpeace:

- * Ten people injured and one killed in Ghazir in 1988 (an-Nahar January 30, 1995).
- * Abdeh al-Hajj, who worked at the Shnanir waste storage place, was told he could use some of the waste to shave his beard. He died after using it, the army report said.
- * People who had bathed in Mediterranean Sea suffered from severe skin cauterization which might have been caused by toxic waste dumped in the sea. Photographs, taken by a physicist who treated these patients leaked to Greenpeace - the physicist wished to remain anonymous as he feared suppression by Lebanese authorities.
- * During a sampling operation carried out by Dr Pierre Malychef in 1988, one drop from a barrel containing a mixture of pesticide and defoliant, comprising up to 40 parts per million of dioxin, fell on his neck. "I washed it off immediately, but chloric acne nevertheless appeared on the spot. Six weeks later it had developed into skin cancer which Dr Maurice Imad removed by electrocoagulation," he said.

Dr Malychef said he had been taken ill while inspecting other barrels of toxic waste. "I was inspecting suspicious containers when I felt a strong burning sensation in the face and eyes and then a shortness of breath," he said in hospital after the incident. Doctors have told him his blood pressure was dangerously low (RTR July 2, 1988)

* Lebanese MP Mansur al-Bun said in 1995: *"The inhabitants of Kisrwan are threatened more than others by the danger emanating from the barrels. Some cases of poisoning, due to the leakage of substances into ground water, had been registered in al-Oqaibeh recently"* (an-Nahar January 28, 1995).

* Goats died in Uyun al-Siman after having drunk polluted water. MP Saud Rufail from the town of Baalbeck reported that 400 goats died in December 1994. He said a physician told him the goats had died from poisoning. The goat owners stated that their animals drank water polluted by barrels containing white powder. Rufail said: *"The militias dug trenches during the war, and barrels were dumped in trenches and then covered with sand. Water mixed with the waste"* (An-Nahar December 10, 1994).

The Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity later ordered samples to be taken from the site where the goats drank water, the region of Mazraat Mshayyek above Hadath-Baalbeck. The two samples - orange-coloured (sample A) and dark red-coloured (sample B) - were analysed by the French company "Lyonnaise des Eaux".

The analysis report of the company said: *"The two products found in the water caused the death of numerous animals, and they proved to be toxic (sample B) and very toxic (sample A). Sample A mainly contains derivatives of colorants, dimethylaniline and trimethyloxiondole."*

The exact composition of sample B could not be established. *"But it is clear that the two products easily mix with water, and can easily lead to a situation of high toxicity when their concentration in water reaches a specific level, probably a matter of a gram per liter. Therefore, the water resources in the area where the products were found should be checked."* (see appendix)

The Environment Ministry claimed that the sheep had died because of cold.

* MP Hagop Jokhadarian told the weekly al-Hawadeth (February 10, 1995) about a report of the Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity regarding the *"pollution of the water in the Hermel and Baalbeck areas, where goats died due to the pollution... There is a pollution of the water and of agricultural products with consequences to the health of people... We know how polluted the waters of the al-Asal source and the waters of Faraya (Kisrwan) are due to the toxic barrels."* He did not elaborate.

* The summer of 1988 remained in the memory of the Lebanese as a period when the authorities banned people from bathing in the sea after barrels had been washed ashore. This led to the closure of many private beaches. In 1988, Mr. Joseph al-Bouari, the owner of the private beach "St Paul" in al-Safra, lodged a claim for a criminal offence committed by unknown persons.

Al-Bouari wrote: *"Unknown persons threw barrels with toxic waste into the sea, forcing authorities to ... forbid bathing in the sea"*. He asked that the culprits be found and "fined 50 million Lebanese pounds as compensation for the closure of touristic sites" (an-Nahar February 24, 1995).

5. ITALIAN GOVERNMENT DECEIVES LEBANESE AUTHORITIES

When in June 1988 the Lebanese media uncovered the scandal, Italian ambassador Antonio Mancini merely remarked: *"We heard about the affair only from the papers. The activities of the company in Milan is totally legal. There is no need to pressure Italy because of this issue. Everything is legal in Italy."* (At-Tadamun July 18, 1988).

But pressure nevertheless rose and in June a clandestine group threatened to attack Italian interests and nationals if Rome did not take back the waste. An anonymous telephone caller claiming to speak for the "Organisation for the Preservation of Lebanese Right" told an international news agency in Beirut that the group gave Italy a week to take the waste back.

"If the Italians do not take their waste back within one week, all Italian embassies, interests and institutions will be hit violently and relentlessly. The Italian people will live in a state of fear and terror," he said. (RTR June 23, 1988)

Following a public outcry and pressure from Premier Hoss, Mr Mancini said that Italy promised it would take back all the waste, and it would also finance the operation *"for humanitarian reasons"*. Italy had *"initially"* allocated three million dollars to assist in the disposal abroad of toxic waste in Lebanon, Mancini said (SZ/RTR, July 16, 1988; AFP July 1, 1988). Mancini suggested that the Lebanese government contacts foreign companies which could incinerate the waste outside Lebanon. He sent to Lebanese Health Minister Joseph al-Haschem a letter with a list of companies which could do this. However, these plans were apparently not implemented.

Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss demanded that the Italian government pay the full cost of transporting the waste. He affirmed that its removal *"does not mean that the file on this crime has been closed, as the outcome still remains in the hands of the judiciary"* (BBC, July 1, 1988; AFP July 15, 1988).

In 1988, a number of senior officials asked Premier Hoss to summon back the Lebanese ambassador in Rome or to freeze diplomatic relations with Italy for a period. Hoss refused and argued that the Italian government was only morally and not directly responsible for the scandal (al-Shuraa quoted in Xinhua July 11, 1988).

6. THE MYSTERIOUS SHIPS

The Italian embassy announced in June 1988 that *several* ships would return the waste to Italy (dpa/SZ June 25, 1988). A month later, the Lebanese Foreign Ministry said Italy asked the Italian company Monteco to collect the waste and return it to Italy (AFP July 1, 1988).

In August, six Italian experts arrived in Beirut to supervise the transfer of the waste to Italy. The head of the team, Miss Cezarrina Ferruzi, said the waste would be loaded into the Italian ship "Cunski" docked in Beirut (RTR, August 23, 1988). The "Cunski" was expected to arrive in an Italian port "in the coming weeks" with waste from Lebanon exported earlier by "Jelly Wax" (AFP September 3, 1988).

Lloyd's List spoke of another ship, the "Voriais Sporadais", which was to return waste from Lebanon to Italy. A Lebanese weekly printed a pictures of Lebanese scientists discussing the situation onboard the "Voriais Sporadais" at Beirut port (Revue du Liban, July 30, 1988). Ahmad Hamze, an expert from the World Health Organization (WHO), was together with Dr Malychef. Dr Rizk and Dr Jerjouï (see appendix).

In the summer of 1988, the "Lebanese Forces" supervised the loading operation that involved Italian experts and Lebanese workers who emptied the contents of 5,500 partly rusty and leaking barrels in the vicinity of the port. They mixed the waste with sand and lime, which is a common practice to treat toxic waste so as to avoid danger to the health of the ships' crews. The waste was then reloaded in about 9,500 new barrels that had apparently been brought from Italy.

5,500 barrels were mixed with sand and lime and put in 9,500 barrels, Dr Pierre Malychef said. These were loaded into *"three cargo ships, including the "Voriais Sporadais"*.

"The air was so bad, one could hardly breathe, which jeopardized the health of the workers and impeded the implementation of the operation. The wharves were stacked with hundreds of empty or semi-empty barrels more or less full of cracks, oozing out toxic leakage which penetrated and contaminated the soil," Malychef said in an long interview (Revue du Liban July 30, 1988).

Dr Jarjoui and Dr Malychef were at the site when the waste was repackaged. They were eyewitnesses to the contamination of the port on September 20, 1988.

"Right from the beginning, 500 barrels broke open and their toxic contents polluted the ground. The other barrels were, after being loaded into three ships, unloaded and emptied, mixed with moist sand and lime, thus polluting more ground," the scientists' report said.

"We saw workers emptying many barrels into the sea and trying to clean the wharf with water canons... They did not react to our protest. Militiamen from the National Fund then detained us, searched for our film material and confiscated it... When we showed our officials papers.... we were accused of being spies."

Dr Jarjoui and Dr Malychef, who wanted to supervise the loading of all the waste, were humiliated by the militiamen and then forced out of the port vicinity. *"We were asked to leave the port, for our own security, and not to interfere in the waste case because it was only their business,"* their report said.

The Lebanese Army Secret Service Report confirmed that Ghassan Tuma from the "Lebanese Forces" confiscated film from the two scientists.

The army report also confirmed that *"many barrels were emptied in the sea, thus polluting it... César Nasr was supervising the operation, together with the Lebanese Forces person responsible for the port's fifth basin, George Medawar"*.

During the reloading operation, hundreds of barrels were crushed by heavy mashinery. The contents and remains were stored in new barrels brought from Italy. The ground of the port's fifth bassin was contaminated. To cover up this ecological crime, bulldozers covered the area with fresh sand. in 1995, Greenpeace received pictures proving this.

Shortly before the "Jolly Rosso", one of the ships onto which waste had been loaded, was to leave Beirut port, the Lebanese Foreign Ministry issued a note to the Italian embassy:

"We have the honour to inform you that the Lebanese government has issued an official complaint regarding the shipment of toxic waste that is taking place in violation of all international health standards. The operation took place without cooperation between Italian experts and the official Lebanese committee of scientists, which was forbidden to supervise the operation. The Foreign Ministry demands that the departure of the ship with the waste be postponed until the Health Ministry issues an authorization. The Foreign Ministry demands that the Health Ministry and the Lebanese committee issue a paper confirming the departure of all the waste before the ship leaves (L'Orient-Le Jour January 13, 1989)."

This note was de facto ignored, and the "Jolly Rosso" left without receiving an official Lebanese confirmation that all the toxic waste from Italy had been shipped out of Lebanon.

In 1994, the supervisor of the operation, César Nasr, stated: *"I confirm sending out of the country the 6,000 barrels at the expense of Mr Antonio Mancini, who paid 3.7 million dollar for the operation (L'Orient-Le Jour September 21, 1994)."*

According to the sources mentioned above, at least four ships were used to ship 9,500 barrels with the content of 5,500 toxic waste barrels out of Lebanon: "Yvonne A", "Cunski", "Voriais Sporadais" and "Jolly Rosso".

Information gathered by Greenpeace indicate that only one ship ever reached Italy: "Jolly Rosso", which is owned by the firm Ignazio Messima. No official Italian report was available confirming that "Voriais Sporadais", "Yvonne A" and "Cunski" ever reached Italy with waste from Lebanon.

7. THE JOLLY ROSSO MYTH

"Jolly Rosso" left Beirut on January 11, 1989. A few days later it anchored off the port of La Spezia, Italy. It had to wait there until April after it was clear where the waste would be treated, authorities said. (dpa January 12, 1989; RTR April 11, 1989 and January 18, 1989; Lloyds List April 13, 1989).

It arrived there with only 2,000 barrels on board, the *Il Sole - 24 Ore* reported (RTR database January 18, 1989). In April 1989, it was allowed to discharge the waste. Port authorities at La Spezia said 1,416 barrels considered the greatest risk would be taken off swiftly (RTR April 11, 1989).

In late 1988 and early 1989, authorities in Italy claimed that all the waste from Lebanon, 2,400 tonnes, was on board the "Jolly Rosso". They did not mention the other ships anymore. Nor did they mention that the 9,500 barrels that left Lebanese territory in fact contained only waste from 5,500 barrels, lime, wood shaving and sand to bind the toxics.

It should be noted that the "Jolly Rosso" was a roll-on roll-off ship, meaning that it could just open its rear door and dump barrels in the sea.

The Lebanese Army report said that the "Yvonne A" *"was probably blown up in the sea... Shortly afterwards barrels containing waste and heavy metals were washed along the Lebanese coast"*.

A United Nations General Assembly report to the Secretary-General on "Illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes", dated July 18, 1989, said:

"In July 1988, in Beirut harbour, a cargo vessel flying the flag of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was loaded with barrels containing exhaust gases with a noxious odour. Close by was another ship flying an unidentifiable flag, which undertook to transfer the said barrels onto a third ship, the "Yvonne A", bearing the Sri Lankan flag. According to available information, the "Yvonne A" was to be sunk with its cargo in the Mediterranean after leaving the harbour."

A radio journalist from Famagusta, Cyprus, told Greenpeace in 1989 that he had intercepted a radio conversation between the captain of "Voriais Sporadais" and another unidentified ship. The two captains were discussing the best place to dump waste. Their position was between 40 and 50 kilometres east of Famagusta between Lebanon and Cyprus.

The Middle East Economic Digest reported on July 7, 1988: *"It is suspected that some of the waste has been dumped into the sea."*

Greek authorities spoke of "seven ships". They said: *"Seven ships transporting waste from Lebanon want to dump it in the sea, and it could have been sunk to keep the operation secret"* (AFP September 16, 1988; An-Nahar January 30, 1995).

All available information about the dumping in the sea fits in with a statement issued by the Italian embassy in Beirut in June 1988, mentioning *"three ships"* that would load the waste and then *"wait for instructions"* in international waters (dpa/Süddeutsche Zeitung June 14, 1989).

If one or many ships were sunk, or if they dumped their cargo into the sea, then this would explain why in 1988/89 barrels were washed ashore in Lebanon. In a letter to the UNDP in 1990, CDR President Malek Salem mentioned where some of these barrels landed:

- * Tyre: 119 barrels (150-litres) containing paints, toxic heavy metals and aniline
- * Tripoli, Abdeh and al-Oqaibeh: barrels containing toxic heavy metals

In 1988, Selim Hoss, who was Prime Minister then, told parliament that the Lebanese Forces had "hurried" to take away the waste from the mountains to the port they controlled, thus hampering investigation. It would have been safer if the waste had stayed where it was. Hoss said the waste was confiscated by judicial authorities in order to secure a professional shipment out of Lebanon at a later stage. The barrels were loaded in "two ships", he said (L'Orient-Le Jour July 9, 1988).

In 1995, Hoss stated explicitly "Some 6,000 barrels were shipped out, and we believed that these were all the barrels that came to Lebanon, but (...) an additional number of barrels, about 10,000, were spotted, and they were spread in different Lebanese areas." (An-Nahar January 31, 1995).

He also said that only some of the waste was returned to Italy, although he had repeatedly demanded that all the waste be taken out of the country. The "Lebanese Forces" and Italian authorities were deceitful when they claimed that all the waste had been returned to sender. He said the remaining barrels were dumped in the sea, in the mountains, burned or sold for reuse (al-Hawadeth July 23, 1988, as-Safir September 23, 1994, an-Nahar January 31, 1995).

In February 1991, Italian Environment Minister Giorgio Ruffolo attempted to put an end to the issue of Italian toxics exported to developing nations once and for all. He said the saga of the "poison ships" carrying Italian toxic waste was over. His comments were made at the opening of a waste treatment plant in Livorno to deal with the waste from ships that returned toxics from Syria, Nigeria and Lebanon in 1988/89. The December 31, 1990 deadline set up by the Italian government for dealing with this "emergency", was "for the first time not just a purely formal decision", Ruffolo said.

8. ITALIAN INDUSTRIALISTS, BROKERS UNDER PRESSURE

Its image badly tattered, the Italian government on September 2, 1988, pledged to ban any further toxic exports to the developing world. Toxic waste would be exported in future only to European Union and OECD member states. "The country that produces waste must also treat it," said Ruffolo. At that time, Italy produced every year 50 million tons of waste, including 5 million tons of highly toxic waste. (AFP September 3, 1988)

On September 20, 1988, government officials went to court to force at least 22 waste producers and brokers to turn over 75 million dollars to meet the cost of transporting and treating incoming Italian waste from countries like Nigeria and Lebanon.

"Jelly Wax" managing director Renato Pent responded indignantly to the lawsuit, insisting that his firm's exports to Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey had all been authorized by officials of those countries.

"No way we will pay. We never sent waste just like that. We have letters from ministers from Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey with the stamps of the Italian embassies allowing the discharge of waste", Pent claimed (AFP September 22, 1988)

"The Italian government should seek reparations from foreign governments that refused to honour their commitments," Pent protested. "And if they refuse to pay, the government should take the money from the aid funds for the Third World."

9. BARRELS APPEAR AGAIN IN LEBANON

On August 29, 1994, hundreds of inhabitants in the Kisrwan mountains northeast of Beirut, prevented officials from the Environment Ministry and a small police force from dumping 19 barrels of waste in Joseph Mireb's stone quarry near the village of Yahshush. The action took place secretly in the middle of the night. Without any security measures, the barrels in a container were to be dumped in a hole only a few meters away from the Ibrahim river.

News of this plan spread when people noticed the smell from the truck while it was slowly driving through villages. The driver carried a gas mask. Church bells rang in the area which is mainly inhabited by Christian Maronites. People rushed to the dumping site and forced police to get the barrels back on the truck and leave the region. Some barrels were damaged when being lifted onto the truck, people panicked, some fainted from the gases. The barrels were then transported to Beirut Port and stored in a container.

In January 1995, the Lebanese media published a document from Kisrwan official Raymond Hitti, allowing "*Dr. Jamil Rima, the advisor to the Environment Minister, to supervise the destruction of outdated plastic substances in the upper Kisrwan area in line with ecological rules he believes are fine...*" (An-Nahar January 28, 1995).

Lebanese MP Samir Aoun said that contractor Francois Rizk was responsible for digging the hole in the mountain, and that Jamil Rima gave him 600 dollars for this.

Environment Minister Samir Moqbel and his advisor, César Nasr, claimed that the waste was not pollutant (as-Safir September 1, 1994). The waste was "*toxic but not poisonous*", and public opinion was "*hysterical*", especially because the dumping was to be carried out "*scientifically*". They said that the waste was outdated ethyl acrylate and methyl acrylate, and claimed that it had been stored in the "Lasco" plastic production factory since 1975. "*The Environment Ministry became active last June because of complaints from inhabitants in the al-Oqaibeh region about the smell emanating from Lasco...*" Nasr said.

Parliamentary deputy Mansur al-Bun from Kisrwan said the waste was part of the Italian deal, and he remarked that "Lasco" had been closed not since 1975 but since 1987, the year when the waste from Italy was imported. He reminded parliament of the fact that only some of the barrels from Italy had been returned to Italy, and that the rest had been lost in Lebanon or dumped in the sea. Al-Bun demanded that this case be reopened. (As-Safir September 1, 1994)

Dr. Milad Jarjoui and other scientists again confirmed that this waste was toxic and carcinogenic and that the waste could be part of the Italian deal. Some of this waste had been stored inside "Lasco", they charged.

Minister Moqbel and Nasr denied that the waste was part of the Italian shipment and threatened to sue Jarjoui. Nasr said in 1994 that he had personally supervised the shipment of all the waste from Italy from the port of Beirut to Italy in 1988. There was no need to reopen the case, he added. Moqbel and Nasr ignored al-Bun's remarks.

On June 14, 1994, about 30 barrels of solid waste were discovered in the Kisrwan mountains near the site where the alleged acrylates were to be dumped. On some was written "BASF, Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik". Other barrels appeared a few kilometres from this site in Tallat Masarat. The barrels were rusty and almost covered by sand. Authorities dug them out and put their contents into a container at Beirut Port. Lebanese ecological groups suspected that this waste was part of the Italian deal. (Lebanese scientists in Green Line Report)

It is to be noted that the outdated chemicals sent by "Jelly Wax" to Lebanon were obviously not all produced in Italy. Some of the chemicals could have been produced in Germany or other countries and bought by an Italian firm that later asked "Jelly Wax" to get rid of them because they were outdated.

The Environment Ministry said that tests it asked sample tests to be made by the Lebanese University and by the Ministry of Agriculture. The results, they claimed, showed that the waste was not harmful.

Deputy Samir Aoun later accused the Environment Ministry of having forged these test results. *"The head of the Academy of Health at the Lebanese University, Dr. George Muradids, told the Justice Department that the documents presented by Jamil Rima were forged, and that Lebanon has no laboratory that can test such substances"* (An-Nahar January 31, 1995).

10. GREENPEACE TAKES SAMPLES

On November 15, 1994, the Greenpeace flagship "Rainbow Warrior" arrived in Beirut - the first official visit by a Greenpeace ship to Lebanon. During a press conference on board, the Lebanese ecological group "Green Line" demanded that authorities allow Greenpeace experts to take samples from the containers at Beirut port. The waste that had been found in the Kiswran mountains had been stored in these containers.

The demand was made in order to have the nature of the waste assessed by an independent source. The press conference triggered a series of events: strong media impact, a meeting between Greenpeace and Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and between Greenpeace and Environment Minister Samir Moqbel and his advisors. Greenpeace was then allowed to take samples.

On Thursday night, November 17, 1994, Greenpeace activists took samples from some barrels in the port. Ruth Stringer from the research laboratory at Exeter University in Britain was among the Greenpeace activists. The sampling action was supervised by army members and by Dr Jamil Rima from the Environment Ministry. The samples were later analysed at the research laboratory in Exeter, and the test results were published in Beirut on January 31, 1995.

The Greenpeace report said the two waste containers at Beirut Port contained methyl acrylate and ethyl acrylate, a highly inflammable liquid used for the production of plastics. They also contained toxic chlorinated paraffin as well as toxic heavy metals in solid waste. The tested samples were not radioactive.

In solid waste samples taken from the two containers, Greenpeace scientists found hydrocarbons from oil residues and chlorinated substances like HCB, a highly toxic chemical that causes neurological damage and renal necrosis (cells in the kidney die), and is a suspected carcinogen. These substances can cause skin and eye irritation, and damage the liver, kidney and reproductive systems. Toxic heavy metals were also found in the solid.

Greenpeace concluded that the solid waste could have been part of the toxic waste imported from Italy because test results of the waste from Italy in 1988 showed that it, too, contained a cocktail of toxic heavy metals and hydrocarbons (oil residues). The solid waste at Beirut port was found in the Kiswran mountains, in the region mentioned by the scientists and by official reports as being the dumping site of many barrels from Italy.

The Greenpeace report from January 1995 stated *"The Lebanese Environmental Ministry made a mistake in the summer of 1994 when it tried to dump the acrylates in the Kiswran Mountains. Dumping is no solution for getting rid of toxic waste, and the mountains are an aquifer region. The acrylates are water soluble and could easily leak out and contaminate the ground water supplies of an aquifer."*

11. THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REOPENS THE CASE

A day after the report was released in Beirut, the Lebanese government ordered a high-level inquiry into the dumping of the toxic waste from Italy. The "Higher Relief Agency", a seven-member ministerial body headed by Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, said it would launch a search for the barrels and remove them as quickly as possible.

The cabinet also asked the Judicial Council - Lebanon's highest court for state security crimes - to investigate the case. The cabinet decree dated February 1, 1995, read: *"The case of the attack against internal state security has been transferred to the judicial body. The case occurred at a different time and led to the import of toxic and dangerous waste to Lebanon and to the spreading of the waste in several*

Lebanese areas. Some was sold and reused, and the waste polluted the environment, harmed people. It affected agriculture and livestock."

The same day, Justice Minister Bahij Tabbarah said that the 1991 general amnesty law for war crimes did not cover the dumping of toxic waste in Lebanon. Prosecutor Said Mirza was appointed to investigate the case again. The cabinet decisions meant that the whole case was no longer solely in the hands of Environment Minister Samir Moqbel, who, according to Parliamentary Deputy Samir Aoun, was involved in another scandal.

Aoun said in January 1995 that he possessed documents proving that Moqbel was involved in waste exports and arms deals, and that in 1985 Moqbel had been detained for a while in Iraq. Moqbel arranged the import of chemicals from Iraq to the "Lebanese Forces". Aoun said this deal included chemicals for the production of ammunition. Moqbel denied the charges.

(It is to be noted that in August 1986, an explosion occurred in a factory for chemical weapons of the "Lebanese Forces" in the East Beirut district of Furn al-Shibbak, killing dozens of people. The area then was cordoned off by the militia, toxic materials and polluted debris were removed and dumped in an unknown place.)

If Aoun's charges proved to be true, it would be clear why minister Moqbel protected former "Lebanese Forces" members Dr César Nasr and Dr Jamil Rima. It would also make sense why these two and other ex-militia members were employed in the Environment Ministry.

The Lebanese Army report said Samir Geagea, the head of the now disbanded "Lebanese Forces", had *"advised that César Nasr and Jamil Rima be appointed advisors to the Environment Minister"*. A move to prevent any new investigation into the waste scandal after the end of the civil war in 1990? Deputies and even ministers called on Moqbel to resign. Moqbel repeatedly denied all charges voiced by MP Samir Aoun and refused to quit.

"It is clear that the Lebanese Forces wanted to take over the Ministry of Environment to cover up the issue of toxic waste. It is known that Dr. César Nasr, an expert at the Environment Ministry, is one of the people involved in the waste issue, and he managed to appoint Dr. Jamil Rima as an expert at the ministry, in line with the advice of Samir Geagea (head of the militia). Dr. Rima worked hard (...) to employ the highest number possible of Lebanese Forces members at the ministry," the army report said.

The seven other former members of the "Lebanese Forces" employed in 1995 at the Environment Ministry were according to this report: Nimeh Abbud, Hanna Siman Rizk, André Isa, Nahi Eid, Ziad Eid, Jean Mifleh, Fouad Haddad.

In January 1995, an outraged Aoun revealed other plans of the Environment Minister: *"Moqbel came to a meeting of the Parliamentary Environment Committee with one of his advisors, Samir Jabbur. In the middle of a discussion about setting up incinerators (in Lebanon) to get rid of solid waste, it became clear that Moqbel wanted to get 430 million dollars from the government to finance this project. Jabbur confirmed to us that Moqbel is his partner in this operation."*

Following harsh criticism by politicians and the media against Moqbel and his advisors, César Nasr resigned on February 2, 1995. He wrote in his letter to Moqbel: *"Following the cheap repeated allegations against me personally ... and following the decision to entrust the judicial body with the case of waste, and following the decision to appoint a special prosecutor to deal with this matter, I believe it is important that I liberate myself from my duties in the ministry..."*

Jamil Rima later also resigned from his post after having been strongly criticised by politicians and ecological groups.

On February 23, 1995, State Prosecutor Said Mirza issued warrants for the arrest of three men suspected of dumping waste in Lebanon during the war: Arman Nassar, Antoine al-Aam and Roger Haddad. Haddad was charged with bringing the waste to Lebanon and al-Amm with disposing of it in various regions of

Lebanon. Arman Nassar, who according to Mirza, contracted the deal, was out of the country. Haddad and al-Amm were arrested.

On February 10, 1995, the "Higher Relief Council" wrote to Premier Hariri suggesting that the judiciary and police find out where the waste is, take samples, dig them out and see to it that they were safely disposed of (An-Nahar February 14, 1995). "*While discussing this issue with the Parliamentary Committee on Environment, some suggested to get in touch with the Italian government to return the waste to sender,*" the letter to Hariri read. It was signed by Minister Moqbel, Finance Minister Fouad al-Seniora and Deputy Premier Michel al-Murr.

In June 1995, Environment Minister Samir Moqbel lost his job in the wake of a government reshuffle. Sources close to Prime Minister Rafik Hariri told Greenpeace that he had made only mistakes in dealing with the issue of toxic waste.

12. ITALIAN SNUB

Several Lebanese politicians and ecological groups demanded that the waste still in Lebanon be found and returned to Italy. Deputy Mohammad Qabbani, a member of the Parliamentary Environment Committee, said in February 1995: "*All the barrels must be returned to sender.*"

But on February 21, 1995, Italian Ambassador in Lebanon, Mr Carlo Calia, claimed that all the toxic waste sent from Italy to Lebanon had been returned to Italy in 1988. It still has to be proved that the barrels with toxic waste recently found in Lebanon are part of the deal, he said.

The Lebanese "Environment Committee to Combat Toxic Waste", a coalition of 24 Lebanese non-governmental organisations, criticised Calia's remarks. "*Italy is responsible for taking back the (remaining) waste,*" the head of the committee, Dr. Kamel Mhanna, said (1.3.1995).

Deputy Mohammad Qabbani, a member of the Environment Committee, said: "*It is clear that the source of the waste is Italy. So why until now didn't the government simply, clearly and honestly demand that Italy return the waste like it did in 1988 when it returned 6,000 barrels?*" (an-Nahar February 14, 1995)

Greenpeace issued a statement rejecting Calia's remarks. It is shameful that the Italian ambassador demands the Lebanese should first prove that the waste from Italy is still in their country. It is his government that ought to prove that not one single toxic waste barrel is still in Lebanon. It is Italy that allowed the company "Jelly Wax" to take advantage of the state of war in Lebanon and dump the highly toxic industrial waste there in 1987. Therefore, the government in Rome has a moral obligation to help Lebanese authorities search for the barrels, dig them out and return them to Italy. The Italian government promised in 1988 to return *all* the waste.

Shortly after Greenpeace's statement, the Lebanese "Civic Emergency Committee" called for protests at the Italian embassy and Beirut government buildings to demand speedy removal of the waste. The committee, including the head of the Parliamentary Environment Committee, Hagop Jokhadarian, said the Ambassador's statement that Italy, in 1988, took back all the waste it dumped was wrong. It was an attempt to ease the pressure on the Italian government, and thousands of barrels still remained in Lebanon (an-Nahar March 22, 1995).

Jokhadarian, who endorsed Greenpeace's remarks on the ambassador's claims, said Italy had brought the toxic wastes to Lebanon, using false documents and without obtaining clearance from the Lebanese government. He said Italy had pledged to remove its waste. "*Italy is committed to taking the toxics back and indemnifying Lebanon,*" Jokhadarian said (UPI and RTR February 22, 1995). He stressed that 15,800 barrels had been dumped in Lebanon. Some 6,000 had been returned and about 10,000 were still in the country (an-Nahar March 23, 1995).

Minister Walid Jumblatt said: "*Some of the barrels were shipped, of course, but they did not reach Italy. His Excellency (the ambassador) may allow me to say, that they did not reach Italy and were sunk in the sea.*"

Even Dr. César Nasr indirectly admitted that many barrels were still in Lebanon. *"About 6,000 barrels were returned on board the ship,"* he said. Asked about the remaining barrels in Lebanon, he said: *"I do not deny the existence of these barrels, but no one knows the exact number of these barrels."* Nasr spoke during a press conference in Beirut on February 7, 1995, during which he explained why he resigned from his post.

However, Lebanese MP Mansur al-Bun had charged: *"César Nasr knows how the waste was imported and where it was dumped under the ground"* (an-Nahar January 20, 1995).

13. LEBANESE COVER UP?

After setting up the "Higher Relief Council", one of its members, Deputy Premier Michel al-Murr, said the waste was also a *"psychological problem"* - a remark that unleashed criticism from politicians and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Shortly afterwards, on February 8, 1995, Prosecutor Said Mirza, who was appointed to investigate the case, ordered the detention of Dr Pierre Malychef for allegedly giving false testimony on the waste scandal. A public outcry followed. A day before his arrest, Malychef had said in a television debate that toxic waste was scattered around the entire country.

It is to be noted that Dr Malychef is regarded as a devoted and credible scientist. In 1988 he was elected to the UNDP's *"Global 500 Honor Roll"* in recognition of *"outstanding practical achievements in the protection and improvement of the environment"* (see appendix).

After one day in detention, Malychef, who is in his 60s and suffers from cardiac problems, was transferred to hospital with the authorization of the prosecutor's office.

On March 2, Minister Walid Jumblatt called for the creation of a pressure group and UN intervention, accusing the Lebanese government of trying to stage a cover-up. *"There are (waste) barrels on land and in the sea. Lebanon, like all Third World countries, is a garbage dump,"* said Jumblatt, leader of the Druze community and minister in charge of people displaced during the war. *"The government handling of the waste issue constitutes an insult to the rights and intelligence of the Lebanese people... The authorities arrested Dr. Malychef because he dared to talk about facts,"* he said.

Deputies, NGOs and the media criticised Malychef's detention. They spoke of an attempt to cover up the scandal. Many, including the Lions Club, demanded that Malychef be freed, *"because he was only telling the truth"*. The Lebanese Association for Human Rights issued a statement saying that the waste issue *"is now focused on arresting witnesses, while the real responsible people .. are still enjoying freedom"* (as-Safir March 8, 1995). The weekly al-Hawadeth wrote on March 3, 1995: *"Authorities seem to tackle the issue, but in the wrong direction... The focus is on blaming one person."*

It was probably public pressure that led to the release of Malychef on March 6, 1995. Authorities claimed that he was released after retracting a statement he had made. Malychef denied this.

In 1994 and 1995, former Environment Minister Samir Moqbel, who had been accused of being one of the key figure trying to cover up the waste scandal, went as far as publicly calling on the population to give him all information about the site of the waste so that he could order its removal and safe storage (As-Safir November 12, 1994). At the same time, he ignored all reports saying where the waste had been dumped or burned. No search was ordered, and authorities said they would await Mirza's investigation results. Health Minister Marwan Hamade and MP Samir Aoun refused to take part in the meetings of the "Higher Relief Council" because Minister Moqbel was a member of the council.

Minister Samir Moqbel even revoked an invitation sent to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Geneva, MP Hagop Jokhardian said. *"The Environment Committee is eager to get UN assistance despite the opposite decision made by the Minister of Environment to freeze this demand. We are awaiting a decision (on the waste decision) from the Higher Relief Council, and we will play the role of a controller."*

Meanwhile, Prosecutor Said Mirza ordered TV producer Zaafer Kujumajian from Tele Liban not to air a story on the waste issue. Mirza claimed that some of the information used by the producer was wrong, and that some other information interfered in the course of the investigation (as-Safir February 2, 1995).

14. CONFRONTATION BETWEEN GREENPEACE AND AUTHORITIES

Lebanese authorities forced the Greenpeace ship "Altair" out of Beirut Port on September 1, 1995. Policemen cut the ropes of the ship, and a tugboat pushed it outside the harbour. A navy patrol vessel then escorted the "Altair" outside the 12-mile zone.

Authorities wanted to prevent Greenpeace from working on the issue of toxic waste and sought to cover up the issue. Greenpeace was scheduled to publish the latest sampling test results on board the ship the same day. The samples, taken in May 1995, proved that two spots on the Shnanir quarry were contaminated by toxic waste. The press conference nevertheless took place at the port's entrance.

The test results by the Greenpeace laboratory at Exeter University (England) proved that soil in the Shnanir quarry is contaminated by a cocktail of highly toxic waste: heavy metals (arsenic, zinc and lead), aromatic organic compounds, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, chlorinated substances like the highly toxic hexachlorobutadiene (HCB), pentachlorobutadiene (PCBD) and hexachlorocyclopentadiene (HCCPD). HCCPD damages the lung and kidney. HCB, PCBD and HCCPD are known to be carcinogens. These toxics could pollute ground waters used currently by people living in residential areas in and around Shnanir. All discovered toxics closely resemble the contents of tons of toxic waste exported by the Italian company "Jelly Wax" to Lebanon in 1987

The new Environment Minister, Mr Pierre Pharaon, claimed the same day that the "Altair" arrived "directly from Israel", thus violating Lebanese law. Fact is that the "Altair" came from Cyprus where its crew members took part in a non-violent action in front of the French embassy to protest nuclear testing before coming to Beirut. This action was reported by the international media. Mr Pharaon also said the toxic waste file was closed because "there is no toxic waste and no pollution in Lebanon". He based his claim on a report written by the French company Burgeap for the Lebanese Environment Ministry. Pharaon did not give any copy of the Burgeap report to the media.

Days later, Greenpeace offered to cooperate with Lebanese authorities and to take samples under official supervision. No reaction. Greenpeace then informed Lebanese public opinion that, in another attempt to cover up the issue, work resumed at the Shnanir quarry despite the fact that its soil contains toxic waste. The quarry had been abandoned since 1988. Sand and rocks from the quarry were mixed with layers of toxic waste and with ashes from waste that had been burnt. These highly contaminated materials were to be used in the construction sector. The problem was then shifted from one spot to many others. People getting in touch with contaminated construction material were endangered.

Days after the expulsion of the "Altair" the report made by Burgeap for the Environment Ministry was leaked to Greenpeace, which published it. Greenpeace charged that the Lebanese government deliberately misinterpreted its own sample test results to cover up the issue of toxic waste. Greenpeace studied the official data written by the French company Burgeap to the Lebanese Higher Relief Council (HRC), which is presided by Premier Rafic Hariri. Greenpeace revealed that Mr. Pharaon bluntly fooled public opinion when he claimed on September 1 that the official test results showed that "there is no pollution in Lebanon."

But Burgeap said in its report that in Shnanir, 25 kilometres northeast of Beirut, "after investigation, there is high suspicion that this site has been used to dump toxic waste from the central part down the wadi. Many wells are available downstream." Burgeap included in its report a map showing that its experts took samples some 200 meters west of the main quarry which, according to Greenpeace tests, is highly contaminated by toxic waste.

In Zuq Mosbeh, 15 kilometres north of Beirut, samples tested by Burgeap proved contaminated by toxic chlorinated substances and heavy metals like manganese. Burgeap wrote to the HRC: "Most the

site is asphalted: It is then of great importance to get cross-checked evidence that it was already asphalted when waste storage occurred. Neighbours' interviews and aerial photographs should be used in this purpose... Hydrogeological further investigation on this site should include comprehensive inventory of neighbouring wells."

Burgeap wrote in its report to the HRC that "most of the samples have been left to HRC to be analysed in Lebanon. A small amount of those samples, mostly doubles, has been shipped to France by HRC, in order to conduct an extensive research." Burgeap proposed the dispatching of the samples in Lebanon to three Lebanese laboratories. However, Mr Pharaon, never mentioned that many more samples were taken than the 82 tested in France. He also never said that he will order further investigations in Shnanir and Zuq Mosbeh.

The day Greenpeace published the Burgeap report, thus embarrassing authorities, Justice Minister Tabbara said that the organisation's campaigner Fouad Hamdan would be arrested for "damaging Lebanon's image abroad and the country's tourism industry". The next day, Mr. Tabbara said that Hamdan would only be interrogated as a "witness". On September 23, 1995, Prosecutor Said Mirza interrogated Hamdan as "a witness" for three hours. Hamdan took with him to the Justice Palace a suitcase with personal belongings - for any case. After leaving the palace, Hamdan again blasted the Lebanese government for attempting to cover up the issue of toxic waste, and he reiterated Greenpeace's will to cooperate with authorities.

15. "COOPERATION" BETWEEN GREENPEACE AND AUTHORITIES

Following weeks of confrontation, authorities realized that "cooperating" with Greenpeace would be the best strategy to solve the issue and gain lost credibility. On September 29, 1995, Mr. Pharaon and Hamdan hold a joint press conference during which the minister officially received from Greenpeace documents on this issue. Greenpeace and Mr. Phartaon pledged to cooperate to solve the issue.

Days later, on October 8, Hamdan showed Mr Pharaon, HRC Secretary-General Yehya Raad and Mr Bertrand Guerin from Burgeap the two spots in the Shnanir quarry proved by Greenpeace tests as contaminated. Mr Pharaon and General Raad promised to decontaminate them as soon as possible. They also promised to implement all recommendations written by Burgeap.

But the "cooperation" lasted only eight months. In May 1996, the Greenpeace Mediterranean Office had no choice but to end the "cooperation" with Mr. Pharaon because he refused to solve the problem in a serious way. He refused to decontaminate the quarry of Shnanir east of Junieh and rejected to publish all details related to the 1987 Italy deal. And he refused to inform public opinion about his activities to solve this issue.

Greenpeace said during a press conference that Mr. Pharaon did not keep his promises. He downplayed even the official test results. The minister did not seem to care about the environment and the health of the people in and around Shnanir. Greenpeace said it cannot trust Mr. Pharaon anymore and will not deal with him on this issue anymore because it was a waste of time. In the meantime a house for cows was constructed on one contaminated spot while the other was covered under rocks. Mr. Pharaon and the Lebanese government are responsible for any future contamination of ground waters and for any future poisoning.

During the press conference, Greenpeace revealed that the Lebanese authorities on April 4, 1996, had shipped secretly to France 12 containers with 77 tons of toxic waste and contaminated land for planned incineration at the company Tredi. The toxics, collected during winter 1995/96, were shipped on board the vessel "Varna" from Beirut to Marseilles. The operation took place secretly, and authorities reluctantly confirmed to Greenpeace the shipment.

The secret operation was carried out by the HRC and the Environment Ministry. Burgeap was supervising the collection and decontamination operation that was carried out on the ground by the British company "Environmental Technologies". Most of the collected waste is part of the 2,411 tonnes

of toxic waste exported from Italy to Lebanon in 1987, Lebanese officials told Greenpeace. The Lebanese tax payers are financing this operation - and not the Italian government.

According to officials documents with Greenpeace, Lebanese authorities collected the toxics from the Lebanese towns and villages of Tripoli, Halat, Bchille, Zelhmaya, Shnanir and Azouz. Lebanese nationals involved in the scandal told authorities where they had dumped the waste in 1987/88, Greenpeace learnt.

Today we can say that only a small amount of the toxic waste from Italy was retrieved and only a few polluted areas decontaminated. There is still a lot to do. Greenpeace also opposed the incineration of the toxic waste in France for environmental considerations. They should be recycled if technically possible or stored safely.

Greenpeace condemned the policy of the Lebanese government to carry out the collection and decontamination operations secretly without any media or other independent control. By doing so Mr. Pharaon told past and future toxic waste traders that the Lebanese government will actively silence every criticism against such crimes. Public opinion has a right to know about every detail so that such an ecological crime is not repeated. As a matter of principle, Lebanese authorities also should have returned to Italy the toxics proved to be part of the 1987 deal.

Greenpeace asked Mr Pharaon why the Lebanese government is not officially demanding from Italy to fulfill its 1988 promise and return all the waste. He answered that the European Union, including Italy, is giving Lebanon millions in grants and aid and therefore it would be inappropriate to embarrass Italy with the toxic waste.

A preliminary evaluation of the campaign came out with the following result:

- * Greenpeace and environmental groups in Lebanon have succeeded in making authorities reopen the toxic waste issue, decontaminate most known areas and collect what can be found. The danger to the environment and the people of Lebanon was reduced.
- * For the first time in Lebanese history authorities directly cooperated with an international non-governmental organisation (NGO), in this case Greenpeace, to solve a major ecological issue. This is a precedent.
- * The public debate on the toxic waste issue has ignited an awareness among many about toxic chemicals and their impact. The Lebanese public opinion and media is today very sensitive about environmental issues.

16. GREENPEACE DEMANDS RETURN TO SENDER

Greenpeace demands that the Italian government fulfill its 1988 promise and return all the toxic waste that can be found in Lebanon. It has a moral obligation to organize and finance

- * a search for the remaining waste in Lebanon,
- * digging the waste out with the help of experts,
- * securing the waste and then shipping it back to Italy,
- * testing contaminated land and rehabilitating it,
- * indemnifying Lebanese citizens if proven victims of the waste.

It should be noted that the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in its 1990 report suggested:

- * implementing an "urgent logistics programme" in Lebanon to assess the situation and "evaluate the risks of pollution of the environment and the risks to public health",
- * using "mobile laboratories for urgent and exact tests" and
- * formulating a "project to rehabilitate the coastline and the doomed contaminated sites, especially the ones polluted by the hydrocarbons and the other dangerous substances".

The Lebanese government must officially demand that Italy fulfill its 1988 promise and return all the toxic waste that can be found. Moreover, Greenpeace urges the Lebanese government to order a search for all the barrels that were sold in Lebanon for reuse and to see to it that their contents, if still existing, are confiscated and secured. The waste barrels from Italy are ecological time bombs in Lebanon's soil and waters, and a threat to the population.

The exact sites where barrels had been dumped and burned are known by the Lebanese authorities and individuals directly involved in the case. Greenpeace urges authorities, in this case the Justice Ministry, the Environment Ministry and the "Higher Relief Council", to inform the public about the investigation results. The public has a right to know.

Greenpeace is willing to cooperate again with the Lebanese government to find the waste and return it to sender - Italy.

IV. SOURCES:

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B/W photos: courtesy of the Lebanese daily an-Nahar. They were taken by Mr George Semarjian, who was killed during fighting between the Lebanese Army and the militia "Lebanese Forces" in 1990, shortly before the end of the civil war.

1988 colour photos in the chronology taken by Dr Pierre maylchef.

V. APPENDIX

1. Basel Convention Text.
2. Document of "Adonis Productions Engineering" and annex, October 21, 1987 (in Arabic).
3. Document of Lebanese Chambre of Commerce and Industry, certificate for the company "Contracting and Commercial Services" (CCS), December 4, 1987 (in French).
4. Document regarding storage of 4,000 barrels in Zuk Mosbeh, signed by Dumit Kamid, October 10, 1987 (in Arabic).
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6. Protocol of Lebanese Parliament session on July 12, 1988, including questions from deputies to Prime Minister Selim Hoss and his answer (in Arabic).
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10. UN General Assembly report on "illegal trafic in toxic and dangerous products and waste", only page 1,2 and 18, July 18, 1989 (in English).
11. Report of the Lebanese scientists, July 15, 1988 (in Arabic).
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15. Lebanese Army report, January 30, 1995 (in Arabic).
16. Greenpeace: "Analysis of Samples Testing Lebanon, January 31, 1995" (in English).
17. Analysis Report "Lyonnaise des Eaux", January 9, 1995.
18. Certificate "Global 500 Honor Roll" to Dr Pierre Malychef from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), June 6, 1988.
19. "Short and medium term hazardous waste management - final Report", Burgeap, 1995. Summary made by Greenpeace of the more than 300-page Burgeap report.