

PUBLIC

**AI Index: MDE 24/002/2008
7 January 2008**

Further Information on UA 333/07 (MDE 24/045/2007, 17 December 2007) and follow-up (MDE 24/046/2007, 18 December 2007) - Incommunicado detention/ fear of torture or ill-treatment/ possible prisoners of conscience

SYRIA **Dr. Feda'a al-Horani (f), aged 51, physician**
 Akram al-Bunni (m), aged 51, former prisoner of conscience, writer
 and political analyst
 Ahmad To'meh (m), aged 51, dentist
 Jabr al-Shoufi (m), aged 60, Arabic literature teacher
'Ali al-'Abdullah (m), aged 57, former prisoner of conscience and
journalist

 Dr Walid al-Bunni (m), aged 43, former prisoner of conscience and
 physician (no relation of Akram and Anwar al-Bunni)
 Dr Yasser al-'Eiti (m), aged 39, physician and poet

New names: Fayez Sarah (m), aged 58, writer and journalist

The writer and peaceful advocate of reform in Syria, Fayez Sarah was arrested on 3 January 2008 and is now reportedly being held incommunicado without charge at the State Security branch in Damascus. His detention brings the number of recently arrested political activists currently being held by State Security to eight. They are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International considers them to be possible prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association.

Similarly to the seven others arrested between 9-17 December 2007, Fayez Sarah participated in a meeting on 1 December 2007 of the Damascus Declaration for Democratic National Change (DDDNC), a leading pro-democracy group. The DDDNC is an unauthorised umbrella grouping comprising opposition and pro-democracy groups in Syria.

Fayez Sarah is believed to have been arrested for defending the remaining DDDNC detainees and denouncing the Syrian authorities' latest arrest campaign during a TV programme on 1 January. More than 40 DDDNC members were arrested, in all, of whom 33 were released within a few days. No charges are known to have been brought against any of those released and still detained.

Walid al-Bunni, Yasser al-'Eiti, Feda'a al-Horani, Akram al-Bunni, Ahmad To'meh, Jabr al-Shoufi , 'Ali al-'Abdullah and Fayez Sarah remain in detention, for reasons that are currently unclear. The Syrian authorities have given no reasons for their continuing imprisonment and, reportedly, they do not have access to legal counsel or contact with their families, increasing concern that they could be subject to torture or other ill-treatment.

Fayez Sarah is a writer and journalist contributing to a number of well known Arab newspapers and magazines including as-Safir, al-Hayat and al-Arab al-Youm. Fayez Sarah is also a member of the Committees for the Revival of the Civil Society (CRCS), an unauthorised pro-reform network of Syrian individuals engaging in human rights-related and political discussion. Fayez Sarah reportedly, suffers from a malfunctioning thyroid gland which requires constant observation and medical attention.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic, French or your own language:

- expressing concern at the arrest of Fayez Sarah on 3 January 2008;
- expressing concern that Feda' al-Horani, Akram al-Bunni, Ahmad To'meh, Jabr al-Shoufi, 'Ali al-'Abdullah, Walid al-Bunni, Yasser al-'Eiti and Fayez Sarah are held incommunicado, apparently on account of the peaceful exercise of their human rights;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee that the eight will not be tortured or ill-treated, and will be given immediate access to their relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment they may need;
- calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally if they are prisoners of conscience held solely for the peaceful expression of their opinions, or else to bring them to trial promptly and fairly on recognizably criminal charges.

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency Bashar al-Assad

Presidential Palace

al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: + 963 11 332 3410

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defence

His Excellency General Hassan Ali Turkmani

Ministry of Defence

Omayyad Square

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 223 7842

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Muhammad al-Ghafari

Ministry of Justice

Al-Nasr Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 666 2460

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Walid Mu'allim

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: + 963 11 3327620

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Syria accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 February 2008.