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Sentence against Anwar al-Bunni deals another blow to human rights in Syria

Amnesty International condemns the harsh sentence handed down today on human rights lawyer Anwar al-Bunni, following an unfair trial that appeared to be politically driven and during which he was not given full access to his lawyers.

The Damascus Criminal Court sentenced Anwar al-Bunni to five years in jail on the charge of "spreading false information harmful to the state". He has consistently denied this charge, which seems to be linked to his legitimate work in defence of human rights.

"This deals another blow to human rights and human rights activists in Syria who have been the target of an intimidation campaign by the authorities," said Malcolm Smart, director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme. "The Syrian authorities should show more commitment to human rights and should cease locking up peaceful critics and advocates of reform."

Anwar Al-Bunni was arrested along with 10 other people for signing the Beirut-Damascus Declaration, a petition calling for the normalisation of relations between Syria and Lebanon. Since his arrest on 17 May 2006, he has been detained at 'Adra prison, near Damascus, where he has been subjected to bad treatment.

Public Document

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