

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: MDE 24/032/2008 (Public)
News Service No: 207
29 October 2008

SYRIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS SENTENCING OF 12 PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS

Amnesty International condemns today's sentencing by a Syrian criminal court of 12 pro-democracy activists to two and a half years in prison.

The activists, all of whom belong to the Syrian opposition group the Damascus Declaration for Democratic National Change, were found guilty following an unfair trial of "weakening national sentiment" and "broadcasting false or exaggerated news which could affect the morale of the country".

Amnesty International considers all 12 activists to be prisoners of conscience who have been imprisoned for calling for democratic reform and respect for human rights. The organization will continue its campaign to secure their release.

For more information, please see Amnesty International's briefing *Repressing dissent: Pro-democracy activists on trial in Syria* (Index: MDE 24/024/2008), issued on 8 October 2008, and subsequent press release *Syria: Release pro-democracy activists immediately*, dated 28 October 2008.