

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal Concern

28 March 1991

SYRIA:Eli Swed  
Selim Swed

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Amnesty International has learned that Eli and Selim Swed, two Syrian Jews imprisoned without trial since 1987, were tried in camera on 5 March 1991, apparently on charges of espionage or treason. They had been arrested in November and December 1987 respectively and held incommunicado for almost two years. Their families were allowed to visit them in 'Adra Civil Prison near Damascus from October 1989.

In January 1990 Amnesty International received reports that the Syrian authorities had acknowledged the detention of Eli and Selim Swed and had indicated that an investigation was in progress and a trial would take place "as soon as possible". Following these reports, Amnesty International issued urgent appeals requesting details of any charges and trial proceedings against Eli and Selim Swed (See UA 186/88, MDE 13/07/88, 14 July and follow-ups MDE 24/10/88, 1 December 1988 and MDE 24/01/90, 31 January 1990). No response to these appeals has been received from the Syrian authorities.

The trial is reported to have eventually begun in November 1990 and to have been adjourned on several occasions. No details of the trial proceedings and the verdict are known to Amnesty International.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Telegrams/telexes/airmail letters:

- seeking confirmation of reports that Eli and Selim Swed have recently been tried in camera with the trial apparently ending on 5 March 1991;
- requesting details of the precise charges against them, as well as details of the trial proceedings, the verdict, and any right of appeal to a higher tribunal;
- seeking assurances that they are being treated humanely.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam  
Vice-President  
Office of the President  
Presidential Palace  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: Vice-President Khaddam, Damascus, Syria  
Telexes: PRESPL 419160 SY

His Excellency Khaled al-Ansari  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Nasr Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria

His Excellency Muhammad Harba  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria

**COPIES TO:** Diplomatic representatives of Syria in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 May 1991.