

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 45/92 Incommunicado Detention/Fear of Torture

SYRIA:

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khayyir

Bahjat Sha'bu

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Khadija Dib

(female)

Amnesty International has received reports that 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khayyir, Bahjat Sha'bu and Khadija Dib are being held incommunicado and it is feared that they may be tortured. They were reportedly arrested in Damascus at the beginning of February 1992 by members of al-Mukhabarat al-'Askariyya, Military Intelligence, in connection with the prohibited Hizb al-'Amal al-Shuyu'i, Party for Communist Action (PCA). Their current whereabouts are unknown. Tens of other members and sympathizers of the PCA are also said to have been arrested at the same time in Damascus, Lataqiyya and Aleppo. Amnesty International does not know how many of these are currently detained.

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khayyir, a doctor born in 1951 and married with one child, has reportedly been sought by the authorities for political activities connected with the PCA. His wife, Muna al-Ahmad, was also detained in connection with the PCA from August 1987 until December 1991 when she was released. She was held without charge or trial and was adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

Bahjat Sha'bu, a former medical student born in 1958 and married with one child is also reported to have been sought by the authorities in connection with the PCA. He had previously been detained in connection with the PCA from 1979 to 1980. His wife, Rana Ilyas Mahfudh, was detained from February 1988 until December 1991, apparently in order to force him to give himself up. She was adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

Khadija Dib, from Lataqiyya aged 32, is a former prisoner of conscience. Her husband, Qais Darwish, is currently detained in connection with the PCA and is adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience. He was arrested in August 1984 and has since been held without charge or trial.

Amnesty International fears that the three detainees may be tortured. In addition, the organization believes that they may be held solely for the non-violent expression of their political beliefs and as such would be prisoners of conscience.

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

- expressing concern at reports that 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khayyir, Bahjat Sha'bu and Khadija Dib are being held and incommunicado and that it is feared that

they may be tortured;

- seeking assurances that they are being treated humanely and are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;

- requesting that all detainees be given prompt access to their families and lawyers, and that all necessary medical care be provided;

- asking for their immediate release unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

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**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency  
President Hafez al-Assad  
Presidential Palace  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 419160 munjed sy**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Muhammad Harba  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Khaled al-Ansari  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Nasr Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Faruq al-Shar'a  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Al-Rashid Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegram: Foreign Affairs Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 411922**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Dr. Iyad al-Shatti  
Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
al-Majlis al-Niyabi Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Health Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: health 412655 sy**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Dr. M. Cherif Bakle  
Ordre des Mediciens Syriens  
Place de l'Etoile  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

and 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 25 March 1992.