

Public

AI Index: MDE 24/004/2002

Distrib: PG/SC

To: Health professionals

From: Medical office / Middle East Program

Date: 26 February 2002

MEDICAL ACTION

Ill-health of three long-term political prisoners:

Hatham Na'al, Faris Murad and 'Imad Shiha

Syria

Key words ill-health / political prisoners

Three long-term political prisoners, Haytham Na'al, Faris Murad and 'Imad Shiha, held in Sednaya Prison in Syria are in need of medical care. Amnesty International is calling for access to medical care in accordance with the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* as well as for their release as they were imprisoned after an unfair trial.

Health information

Haytham Na'al, Faris Murad and 'Imad Shiha need access to proper medical care for the following diseases:

Haytham Na'al, born in 1950, is suffering from intestinal disease including ulcers and has been taken to hospital on many occasions. In addition he suffers from a lung condition and urinary tract disease;

'Imad Shiha, born in 1954, is suffering from a number of diseases including a chronic intestinal complaint and an injury of the leg;

Faris Murad, born in 1950, is suffering from a spinal injury and high blood pressure. He reportedly has also lost his teeth as a result of dental disease. He has a deeply bowed posture apparently as a result of the torture on the 'German Chair': a metal chair with moving parts which stretches the spine and causes severe pressure on the victim's neck and legs.

Amnesty International has been unable to obtain further details of the above medical complaints. Haytham Na'al, Faris Murad and 'Imad Shiha also have psychological problems due to prolonged detention and being held incommunicado for many years. In addition, the failure of the Syrian authorities to release them along with thousands of political prisoners released as a result of Presidential amnesties over the last ten years, has impacted severely on their mental health. Their health condition is serious according to former detainees.

Torture and unfair trial

Haytham Na'al, Faris Murad and 'Imad Shiha are members of the Arab Communist Organisation. They have been imprisoned since July 1975 in connection with their alleged involvement in bombings. They were sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour by the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC). During their initial stage of detention they were reportedly tortured and ill-treated apparently to force them to confess to the charges brought against them. The three were tried along with others who were sentenced to death by the SSSC and executed.

Recommended actions & addresses

Please write letters in English, Arabic or your own language to the authorities below, using professionally-headed paper if you use this in your profession:

expressing concern about continued reports of ill-health of Haytham Na'al, Faris Murad and 'Imad Shiha, held in Sednaya Prison;
urging the authorities to provide the three prisoners with prompt access to adequate medical care in accordance with the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*;
urging the authorities to release Haytham Na'al, Faris Murad and 'Imad Shiha who were imprisoned following a trial in 1975 which did not meet international standards for a fair trial.

Addresses

His Excellency

President Bashar al-Assad

Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency

Nabil al-Khatib

Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: + 963 11 224 6250
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency

Dr Muhammad Harba

Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Merjeh Circle
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Salutation: Your Excellency

Please send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of Syria accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response, referring to your previous letter(s). Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 30 April, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

Monitoring of action

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter-writing actions. If you write one, two, three or more letters, please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters you write e.g. MDE 24/004/2002 - 2 (if you write two letters).

Please send your message to medical@amnesty.org Thank you.