

Further Information on UA 09/07 (MDE 24/004/2007, 05 January 2007) - Fear of torture and other ill-treatment/incommunicado detention/forcible return/medical concern

SYRIA **Yassin Suleiman, (m) Kurd, aged 35**
 Akash Suleiman (m), his father, aged over 60 (name previously unknown)

Syrian Kurd Yassin Suleiman and his father, Akash, are still detained incommunicado, putting them at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment. They have reportedly been held since 21 December 2006, a few weeks after Yassin Suleiman, his wife and daughter were forcibly returned to Damascus from Norway, after their asylum application was refused.

Amnesty International contacted the Norwegian ambassador to Syria and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo, calling on them to exert pressure on the Syrian authorities on behalf of the two men.

Yassin Suleiman was arrested when he obeyed a demand from Syrian State Security to go to their office in the north-eastern town of Qamlishi. From there he was sent to the office in Damascus. His father, Akash Suleiman, followed him to Damascus, where they were both detained. It appears that their detention is related to Yassin Suleiman's alleged membership of the unauthorized Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party.

According to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Norway is a signatory no one should be "... expelled or returned ... in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English, French or your own language:

To the Syrian authorities

- expressing concern at reports that Yassin and Akash Suleiman are being held incommunicado by State Security;
- calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally, unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to provide immediate guarantees that they are not being tortured or otherwise ill-treated and to ensure they are permitted visits from their family, a lawyer of their choosing and any medical treatment they may require.

To the Norwegian authorities

- stressing that the forcible return of Yassin Suleiman and his family to Syria, where they are at risk torture or ill-treatment, is a violation of Norway's obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Refugee Convention;
- urging the authorities to use their influence to ensure Yassin Suleiman and his father Akash are not tortured or ill-treated in Syrian custody, and are allowed visits from their families, access to lawyers of their choosing and any medical assistance that they may require.

APPEALS TO:

Syrian authorities

His Excellency President Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Abu Rummaneh
al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 332 3410
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Walid Mu'allim
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Abu Rummaneh
al-Rashid Street
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 3310134
+963 11332 7620
Email: syr-mofa@scs-net.org
Salutation: Your Excellency

Norwegian authorities

Bjarne Håkon Hanssen
The Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion
The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion
PO.Box 8019 Dep.
0030 Oslo, Norway
Fax: +47 22 24 95 76
Salutation: Dear Minister

Terje Skjeggstad
Director
The Immigration Appeals Board
PO.Box 8165 Dep.
0034 Oslo, Norway
Fax: +47 21 08 50 01
Salutation: Dear Mr Skjeggstad

Norwegian Foreign Minister

Jonas Gahr Støre
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO.Box 8114 Dep.
0032 Oslo, Norway
Fax: +47 22 83 39 34
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Syria accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 March 2007.
