

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 24/07/95
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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Middle East Regional Program
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FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL CONCERN

(See MDE 24/05/94 - 19 June 1995)

**Health professionals imprisoned in 1980
SYRIA**

Keywords

Theme: detention without trial/ ill-treatment/ death in custody/ POC/ disappearance

Profession/association: doctor/ surgeon/ GP/ ophthalmologist/ pharmacist/ gynaecologist/
medical student/ veterinary surgeon/ dentist

In June 1995, Amnesty International issued information on the arrest of over 100 health professionals in 1980 following a strike called by professional associations in April of that year.

The strike was the culmination of protests led by the Syrian Bar, Medical and Engineers' Associations to call for an end to the state of emergency in force since 1963 and a restoration of rights and legal safeguards.

It was believed that many of the health professionals arrested at the time could still be in prison without charge or trial. Although a small number were known to have been released, executed or to have died in prison, no information about the whereabouts of the majority had been provided by the authorities.

Amnesty International has now received a letter from the Syrian Embassy in London stating that the authorities in Damascus had forwarded a list of individuals who had been the subject of AI appeals and who were in fact released. The list included 18 of the health professionals arrested in connection with the 1980 strike. (Not all the releases are recent - the dates of a few are given as being in the 1980s; others are in the early 1990s, around the time of Presidential amnesties which were declared in December 1991 and March 1992.)

The names of the 18 said to have been released are:

	<i>Reported date of release</i>		
'AWNA Yasir 'Awni	01.12.1992	GP	(15)
al-BUSHI Ahmad	16.12.1991	Medical student	(23)
al-DUKHI 'Amer	23.12.1991	Doctor	(26)
HADDAD Walid	02.04.1992	Dentist	(32)
HAMDU Yasir Haj	24.12.1991	ENT specialist	(36)

IBRAHIM Rafiq Ibrahim	21.07.1991	GP	(40)
JABRI	16.12.1991	GP	(43)*
KHALIL Ahmad Kamil	21.07.1991	Specialist, internal medicine	(49)
KOBA DAR Kamal	12.12.1980	Doctor	(53)
NASHAR Ahmad	19.12.1991	Vet	(64)
al-QUSAYRE Musallam	23.12.1991	Student of surgery	(68)
al-SALIH 'Abd al-'Aziz	16.01.1986	Doctor	(76)**
SAWWAN Riad 'Abd al-Qadir	07.01.1985	Doctor	(80)
SHAYKHA Zakariya	18.12.1991	GP	(83)
TAHA	18.12.1991	GP	(88)***
'UBAIDAN Qaddur	19.12.1991	GP	(92)
'UTHMAN Mustafa	28.12.1991	Surgeon	(97)
ZAHRA Yasir	18.12.1991	Student in ENT	(103)

The numbers in brackets relate to the numbering system used in the information issued by Amnesty International in its action of 19 June 1995.

The asterisks against three of the names indicate that these are assumed to be the same individuals as those named by the embassy. (In a few instances, AI did not initially have the full family name.) The names given in the letter from the embassy were:

- * Nabil Jabri
- ** 'Abd al-'Aziz Haj Salih
- *** Bissam Taha

A total of 48 people were named in the letter as having been released, the remainder being individuals arrested at different times in unrelated cases. No specific reference was made to the mass arrests in 1980 and no information was given on any of the other health professionals whose names appeared in the June 1995 action.

Recommended Actions

Letters can therefore continue. Letters should

- welcome the recent news that some of the health professionals arrested following a one-day strike in March 1980 have apparently been released
- call for the unconditional release of any health professionals who are still held following the 1980 strike

Addresses

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His Excellency

Mr Hasin Hasun
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
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Copies to:

His Excellency
Dr Muhammad Iyad al-Shatti
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Ministry of Health
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and to the Syrian diplomatic representative in your country