

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 24/08/95

4 March 1996

**Further information on UA 250/95 (MDE 24/09/95, 7 November 1995) - Health Concern  
/ Prisoner of conscience**

**SYRIAFaraj Ahmad Birqdar, poet and journalist, aged 43**

Amnesty International has received a response from the Syrian Embassy in Hungary following the UA Network's appeals on behalf of Faraj Ahmad Birqdar. The Embassy stated that Faraj Ahmad Birqdar was arrested on charges of belonging to a terrorist group which commits violence against citizens, and claimed that he has not been tortured.

However, the reports received by Amnesty International - that Faraj Ahmad Birqdar was tortured during pre-trial incommunicado detention and that his health deteriorated as a result - are reliable, and the organization remains concerned for the prisoner's health and well-being. Likewise, contrary to the details given in the Embassy's response, Amnesty International's information indicates that Faraj Ahmad Birqdar is a prisoner of conscience who has not used or advocated violence.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language or in your own language:**

- welcoming the response from the Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Budapest concerning Faraj Ahmad Birqdar;
- noting that, despite the Syrian Embassy's statement that Faraj Birqdar has not been tortured, Amnesty International has received well-founded reports to the contrary;
- reiterating calls for an impartial and independent investigation into allegations that he was tortured in pre-trial incommunicado detention and for anyone found responsible to be brought to justice;
- expressing continuing serious concern about the health of Faraj Birqdar, and seeking assurances that he is being provided with all necessary medical treatment;
- calling for the unconditional and immediate release of Faraj Ahmad Birqdar as a prisoner of conscience.

*Appeals from doctors and other health professionals would be welcome.*

**APPEALS TO:**

1) His Excellency  
President Hafez al-Assad  
Presidential Palace  
Abu Rummaneh  
Al-Rashid Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: President Al-Assad, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 419160 munjed sy**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

2) His Excellency  
Dr. Muhammad Harba  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 411018 AFIRS SY**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

3) 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**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

4) Director (please direct medical concerns only to this address)  
Sadnaya Prison  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Director, Sadnaya Prison, Damascus, Syria**  
**Salutation: Dear Director**

**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 25 April 1996.