

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/013/2004

17 February 2004

Further Information on UA 324/03 (MDE 24/042/2003, 11 November 2003) Incommunicado detention/fear of torture and ill-treatment

SYRIA

Hasan Mustafa (m), aged 32, silversmith

Killed: Khalil Mustafa (m), aged 34, his brother

Hasan Mustafa was released, reportedly from Sednaya Prison, on or shortly before 30 January 2004. Until shortly before his release the authorities had reportedly denied having any information about his detention.

He was in need of medical treatment for the effects of torture he had suffered in custody. He had reportedly undergone *falaqa* (hitting the soles of the feet with a stick or cable) and the *dullab* ("tyre"), which involves forcing the victim into a suspended tyre and beating him or her with sticks and cables.

A cousin of his, Muhammad Shams al-Din Mustafa, who had been detained some time after him, was released at about the same time. He had reportedly been supporting the widow and five children of Khalil Mustafa, who died in custody in August 2003. The family had reportedly received threats demanding that they keep quiet about the detentions. It is believed that neither man was ever charged with any offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Khalil Mustafa was reportedly arrested on 6 August 2003. Initial reports suggested that he had been detained in connection with a debt he owed, but the family is reportedly not aware of anyone to whom he owed money and reportedly no name of any creditor has ever been given. He was allegedly tortured at the Military Intelligence Detention Centre in the city of Aleppo. On 14 August, his corpse was handed over to his family and buried in a cemetery in Aleppo. Severe injuries and bruises were reportedly visible on his corpse, including a leg broken in two places, a missing eye, and a head wound.

Many thanks to all who took action on this case. Please send a final round of appeals, to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, French, Arabic, or your own language:

- welcoming the releases of Hasan Mustafa and Muhammad Shams al-Din Mustafa;
- expressing concern that Hasan Mustafa and Muhammad Shams al-Din Mustafa were apparently detained incommunicado and without charge, and at reports that Hasan Mustafa was tortured while in detention;
- urging the authorities to carry out an immediate and independent investigation into the death in detention of Khalil Mustafa, and into the reported torture of Hasan Mustafa, with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice;
- requesting again an end to the apparent persecution of the family of Khalil Mustafa, who is believed to have died under torture on 10 August 2003.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President Bashar al-Assad
President of the Republic
Presidential Palace
Abu Rummaneh, Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Telegram: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria

Fax: + 963 11 332 3410
Telex: 419160 prespl sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Major General Ali Hammud
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Telegram: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria
Fax: + 963 11 222 3428
Telex: 411016 AFIRS SY
Salutation: Your Excellency

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 30 March 2004