

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/039/2001

UA 262/01 Prisoner of conscience/Fear of torture/18 October 2001

Incommunicado detention

SYRIA 'Abdalla Hoshah (m), aged 61

On 17 October, Syrian Political security agents (*al-Amn-al-Siyassi*) arrested prisoner of conscience, 'Abdalla Hoshah. He is being held incommunicado and is at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

'Abdalla Hoshah was reportedly taken from his home in the city of Latakia in the early hours of 17 October. No arrest warrant was presented by the security agents and his family were reportedly told that he would be back home in half an hour. As a leading member of the Communist Party Political Bureau (CPPB) and the National Democratic Alliance (an opposition coalition of left-wing and Arab Nationalist groups), it is feared that he may be tortured or ill-treated, in order to force him to divulge information about the current activities of the CPPB.

'Abdalla Hoshah is married with two children. He is also the former director of a cultural centre in Latakia. He has been under security surveillance for a number of years and is reported to have been subjected to constant harassment. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the peaceful expression of his political views.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

'Abdalla Hoshah arrest comes approximately six weeks after the arrest of Rial al-Turk, the secretary general of the banned CPPB. (See UA 226, MDE 24/029/2001, 7 September 2001 and follow ups). CPPB members risk detention and torture for their opposition to the Syrian government. Scores of CPPB members who were detained as prisoners of conscience for up to 15 years in the early 1980s, have been released in recent years.

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

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of 'Abdalla Hoshah as a prisoner of conscience,
- seeking assurances that he is being well-treated and not subjected to torture or ill-treatment,
- urging that he be allowed immediate and unrestricted access to his family, a lawyer, and to whoever medical care he may need.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
President Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 419160 prespl sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency
Nabil al-Khatib
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: + 963 11 224 6250

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency
Dr Muhammad Harba
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus

Syrian Arab Republic

Faxes: + 963 11 222 3428

Telexes: 411016 AFIRS SY

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

His Excellency
Nasser Qaddur
State Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: + 963 11 332 0686

Salutation: Your Excellency

and 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 29 November 2001.