

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: MDE 24/046/2007**

**18 December 2007**

**Further Information on UA 333/07 (MDE 24/045/2007, 17 December 2007) - Incommunicado detention/fear of torture or ill-treatment/ possible prisoners of conscience**

**SYRIA**            **Dr. Feda'a al-Horani (f), aged 51, physician**  
**Akram al-Bunni (m), aged 51, former prisoner of conscience, writer and political analyst**  
**Ahmad To'meh (m), aged 51, dentist**  
**Jabr al-Shoufi (m), aged 60, Arabic literature teacher**  
**'Ali al-'Abdullah (m), aged 57, journalist**

**New names:**    **Dr Walid al-Bunni (m), aged 43, former prisoner of conscience and physician (no relation of Akram and Anwar al-Bunni)**  
**Dr Yasser al-'Eiti (m), aged 39, physician and poet**

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On 17 December, peaceful advocates of political reform Walid al-Bunni and Yasser al-'Eiti were arrested and are reportedly held incommunicado without charge at State Security branch in Damascus. A total of seven political activists are now thought to be held by State Security and are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International considers them to be probable prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association.

Like the five others arrested between 9-17 December, Walid al-Bunni and Yasser al-'Eiti were arrested after taking part in a meeting on 1 December of a leading pro-democracy group, Damascus Declaration for Democratic National Change (DDDNC). The DDDNC is an unauthorised umbrella grouping comprising opposition and pro-democracy groups in Syria. A total of 40 DDDNC members were arrested, but the other 33 DDDNC members were released within a few days and no charges are known to have been brought against any of them.

Walid al-Bunni, Yasser al-'Eiti, Feda' al-Horani, Akram al-Bunni, Ahmad To'meh, Jabr al-Shoufi and 'Ali al-'Abdullah remain in detention, for reasons that are currently unclear. The Syrian authorities have given no reasons for their continuing imprisonment and, reportedly, they do not have access to legal counsel or contact with their families, increasing concern that they could be subject to torture or other ill-treatment.

Walid al-Bunni is a former prisoner of conscience. He was previously imprisoned for four years following an unfair trial before Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) for his involvement in the so-called "Damascus Spring", a pro-reform movement.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest on 17 December of Walid al-Bunni and Yasser al-'Eiti;
- expressing concern that Feda' al-Horani, Akram al-Bunni, Ahmad To'meh, Jabr al-Shoufi, 'Ali al-'Abdullah, Walid al-Bunni and Yasser al-'Eiti are thought to be held in State Security branches, apparently on account of the peaceful exercise of their human rights;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee that the seven will not be tortured or ill-treated, and will be given immediate access to their relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment they may need;
- calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally if they are prisoners of conscience held solely for the peaceful expression of their opinions, or else brought to trial promptly and fairly on recognizably criminal charges, or released.

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency Bashar al-Assad

Presidential Palace

al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 332 3410**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Defence

His Excellency General Hassan Ali Turkmani

Ministry of Defence

Omayyad Square

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 223 7842**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Muhammad al-Ghafari

Ministry of Justice

Al-Nasr Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 666 2460**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Walid Mu'allim

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: + 963 11 3327620**

**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 29 January 2008.