

PUBLIC

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21 September 2004

UA 270/04      Fear of torture / Incommunicado detention

SYRIA      'Abd al-Salam Assaqa (m), aged 45

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'Abd al-Salam Assaqa is said to be in a "horrific" physical condition after being tortured and beaten while in incommunicado detention at the Military Intelligence Centre in Homs, western Syria. He is believed to have been tricked into arrest by the Syrian security forces.

A Syrian citizen, 'Abd al-Salam Assaqa has been living with his family in exile in Jordan for over 20 years. On 27 August, his wife and children, who had been visiting Syria, were stopped at the border as they attempted to re-enter Jordan. 'Abd al-Salam Assaqa was asked to come to the Syrian side of the border to sign consent papers for the travel of his eight-year-old son, but when he arrived, was himself threatened by Syrian security forces. He tried to flee back to the Jordanian side of the border, but was captured, and handed over to Syrian security officers.

While in incommunicado detention at the Military Intelligence Centre in Homs, he is said to have been repeatedly beaten on his feet and all over his body with sticks and cables, and to have suffered many beatings to his stomach. He has not received any visits from his family, lawyers or doctors, nor has he been charged with any offence.

The arrest of 'Abd al-Salam Assaqa may be a result of his reported sympathies with the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, an organization which renounced armed struggle in 1986. In recent years there have been a number of cases in which the Syrian authorities have facilitated the return of Syrian exiles by issuing them travel documents, but have then arrested and detained them on arrival. The Muslim Brotherhood and those affiliated to them are subject to the death penalty under Syrian law 49.

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

- expressing concern at the incommunicado detention and reported torture and ill-treatment of 'Abd al-Salam Assaqa;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of 'Abd al-Salam Assaqa unless he is to be charged with a recognisable criminal offence;
- calling for 'Abd al-Salam Assaqa to be granted immediate access to his family, to a lawyer, and to any medical assistance that he may require.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Bashar al-Assad  
President  
Presidential Palace  
Abu Rummaneh  
al-Rashid Street  
Damascus  
Syrian Arab Republic  
**Fax:            + 963 11 332 3410**  
**Salutation:    Your Excellency**

His Excellency Major General 'Ali Hammud  
Minister of the Interior

Ministry of Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Fax: + 963 11 222 3428**  
**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 2 November 2004.