

PUBLIC

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To: Health professional coordinators
From: Medical team / Middle East Program
Date: 17 December 2002

Further information on
MEDICAL ACTION

Mamum al-Humsi, prisoner of conscience on hunger strike
Syria

(see original action MDE 24/006/2002, 6 March 2002)

Key words prisoner of conscience / ill-health / medical care / hunger-strike

Amnesty International's concerns

Amnesty International has learnt that Mamum al-Humsi, prisoner of conscience and former parliamentarian, started a hunger-strike on 9 December 2002 to protest treatment he is receiving in prison. Amnesty International renews its call for his immediate release and for any medical treatment he may require, in particular because Mamum al-Humsi suffers from diabetes.

Background information

Mamum al-Humsi was arrested on 9 August 2001 and charged with offences including "attempting to change the constitution by illegal means". In March 2002 he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and continues to be held at 'Adra prison near Damascus. He has recently started a hunger-strike to protest the treatment he is receiving in prison. He was, for example, not allowed any family visits when 'Eid, which marks the end of Ramadan, was celebrated. He reportedly is not allowed regular exercise or access to newspapers or radio. Several political prisoners are also reported to have been held in solitary confinement and not have access to appropriate medical care.

Recommendations

Please write letters in Arabic, French, English or your own language to the authorities below, using professionally-headed paper if you use this in your profession:

- Introducing yourself in your professional capacity and/or as a member of Amnesty International;
- Referring to your previous letter (if applicable);
- Expressing concern at reports that Mamum al-Humsi, held in 'Adra prison, is on hunger-strike and asking for information on his current health;
- Urging the authorities to provide him with access to appropriate medical care;
- Calling on the authorities to release Mamum al-Humsi who has been imprisoned for the peaceful expression of his opinion.

Addresses

His Excellency

President Bashar al-Assad

Presidential Palace

Abu Rummaneh

Al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency

Nabil al-Khatib

Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice

Al-Nasr Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: + 963 11 224 6250

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Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency

Maj-Gen Ali Hammud

Minister of the Interior

Ministry of the Interior

Merjeh Circle

Damascus

Syrian Arab Republic

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Salutation: Your Excellency

Copies of appeals

Please send copies of your appeals to diplomatic representatives of Syria accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within six weeks of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response, referring to your previous letter(s). Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 28 February 2003, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

Monitoring of actions

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter writing actions. If you write one, two or more letters please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters you write e.g. MDE 24/051/2002 - 3

Please send your message to medical@amnesty.org

Thank you