

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **Syria: The authorities must investigate deaths in detention and end torture and ill-treatment**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned to learn of the deaths of two Syrian Kurds in one week, both reportedly following torture and ill-treatment in detention by the security forces. The deaths fit into a pattern of torture and ill-treatment of detainees in Syria's prisons and detention centres.

Ahmad Ma'mu Kenjo, a 37-year-old father of three, is reported to have died on 3 August from a brain haemorrhage resulting from severe head injuries received in a beating by a security patrol in Ras al-'Ayn, north-eastern Syria, in late March, and by further beatings to the head sustained while detained incommunicado at an unknown location during April and May. The initial head wound - reportedly perpetrated by officers of Military Intelligence (al-Mukhabarat al-'Askariya) or of Political Security (al-Amn al-Siyassi) - was said to have caused severe head pains and serious brain damage - as a result of which he was released. He died at home. It is believed that Ahmad Ma'mu Kenjo was never charged with an offence; however, his brother Husayn Kenjo is currently held in 'Adra Prison, near Damascus, on charges connected to his alleged involvement in the Qamishli events in mid-March.

On 1 or 2 August, Ahmad Husayn Hasan (named in some reports as Ahmad Husayn Husayn) reportedly died in custody at the Military Intelligence Branch in al-Hasaka, also in north-eastern Syria, having been detained incommunicado since his arrest on 13 July. Ahmad Husayn Hasan, a father of four, was from al-Malikiye (known as Deyrek in Kurdish) near the borders with Iraq and Turkey, and is believed to have died due to torture. Military Intelligence officers told Ahmad Husayn Hasan's family that his body was buried at Tel Ma'teb cemetery, without allowing anyone to see the body or to have a post-mortem conducted. It is believed that Ahmad Husayn Hasan was never charged with an offence. He was reportedly a sympathiser of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, an organisation closely linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The above cases fit in with a consistent pattern of torture and ill-treatment of detainees by the Syrian security forces, and reports of increasing ill-treatment of Kurdish detainees, including children, since March. In 2004 alone, Amnesty International has received information on the deaths in custody of eight Syrians, of whom five were Syrian Kurds. No investigation is known to have been carried out into the deaths.

Amnesty International calls on the Syrian authorities to establish an independent and impartial investigation into the deaths of Ahmad Ma'mu Kenjo and Ahmad Husayn Hasan, and into all recent deaths in custody in accordance with international standards. Amnesty International also calls upon the authorities to prosecute anyone found responsible for torture and ill-treatment, and to compensate the families of those who died as a result of torture and ill-treatment.

**Background**

Amnesty International has documented 38 different types of torture and ill-treatment reportedly used against detainees in prisons and detention centres in Syria. It is believed that most of these forms of torture and ill-treatment continue to be used, and indeed that new methods are being used.