

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/010/2002

4 April 2002

Further information on UA 226/01 (MDE 24/029/2001, 07/09/2001) and follow-ups (MDE 24/030/2001, 11/09/2001) and (MDE 24/033/2001, 20/09/2001) - Prisoner of conscience New Concern: Unfair Trial

SYRIARIad Seif (m), Parliamentarian, 54  
Hassan Sa'dun (m), Retired teacher  
'Aref Dalilah (m), Economist, in his early 60s  
Walid al-Bunni (m), Physician, 38  
Kamal al-Labwani (m), Physician, 44  
Habib Saleh (M), Businessperson, 52  
Habib 'Isa (m), Lawyer, 55  
Fawaz Tello (m), Engineer

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Riad Seif, an independent member of the Syrian People's Assembly (Parliament), was sentenced to five years imprisonment on 4 April by the Criminal Court in the capital Damascus. He was found guilty of a number of offences, including attempting to change the Constitution by illegal means and inciting ethnic strife.

Amnesty International considers Riad Seif to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful expression of political opinion and his involvement with civil and human rights groups.

Riad Seif was arrested without a warrant, before his parliamentary immunity had been removed. When this was done, proper procedures were not followed. His trial fell short of international standards for fair trials. He was denied an adequate public hearing as well as confidential access to his lawyers, who were not allowed to call in defence witnesses.

Amnesty International has received information that several other prisoners of conscience, including Habib 'Isa, Fawaz Tello, Habib Saleh and Kamal al-Labwani who are also held at 'Adra Prison, on the outskirts of Damascus, began a hunger strike on 19 March. They are protesting against their continued detention without trial, the denial of access to their lawyers and the denial of appropriate medical care.

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

- expressing concern at the trial and sentencing of Riad Seif is being held solely for the peaceful expression of his political opinion;
- calling for the immediate release of Riad Seif, Hassan Sa'dun, 'Aref Dalilah, Walid al-Bunni, Kamal al-Labwani, Habib Saleh, Habib 'Isa, and Fawaz Tello as prisoners of conscience;
- urging that the men are allowed immediate access to their lawyers and any medical assistance they may require.

**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  
**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**e-mail: moj@net.sy**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency  
Maj-Gen Ali Hammud  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus  
Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 411016 AFIRS SY**  
**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 16 May 2002