

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/023/2001

UA 199/01

Fear of T

SYRIASulayman Hissu [m], a Syrian Kurd and German citizen, aged 49

Sulayman Hissu is being held in incommunicado detention after he was arrested at Damascus airport by Syrian security forces. Torture and ill-treatment of political detainees is routine in Syria and there are fears that Sulayman Hissu may be tortured or ill-treated while he is held without access to his family or a lawyer.

Sulayman Hissu was arrested by the Syrian security forces on his arrival at Damascus airport on a Syrian airlines flight from Germany on 31 July 2001. According to information received by Amnesty International, the authorities have acknowledged his detention and stated that he had been transferred to a detention centre in the city of Qamishli in northern Syria.

Sulayman Hissu, who is a German citizen and carries a German passport, has been living in exile in Germany since 1977. Sulayman Hissu returned to Syria voluntarily, apparently the first time he has travelled to his home country since going into exile. Although he has apparently not been politically active on Syrian issues in recent years, his detention may be related to his past activities as an opponent of the Syrian Government.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture and ill-treatment of political detainees is routine in Syria especially during interrogation. Amnesty International knows of other Syrian Kurds detained on their returning to the country from abroad and held in incommunicado detention, apparently to force them to divulge information on the political activities of Syrian Kurds living abroad. Hundreds of political detainees, including prisoners of conscience, belonging to unauthorized political groups are currently held in Syrian prisons.

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

- seeking assurances that Sulayman Hissu is being well treated and not subjected to torture and ill-treatment while held in detention;
- urging that Sulayman Hissu is given continuing and unrestricted access to his family, a lawyer and to the German consular service;
- asking for the reasons why Sulayman Hissu is being detained, and calling for his immediate release unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a fair trial according to international standards for fair trial.

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

COPIES TO:

His Excellency
Dr Muhammad Harba

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Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Faxes: + 963 11 222 3428
Telexes: 411016 AFIRS SY

His Excellency
Nasser Qaddur
State Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: + 963 11 332 0686

and 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 14 September 2001.