

11 September 2001

**Further information on UA 226/01 (MDE 24/029/2001, 7/09/2001) - Prisoner of Conscience****SYRIARIad Seif (m), Parliamentarian, 54****New names:****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 Salih (m), Businessman, 52**

Following the arrest of Riad Seif on 6 September, the Syrian Political Security (*al-Amn al-Siyassi*) arrested another five men, named above, on 9 September.

They are being held incommunicado detention and are at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Amnesty International considers all five to be prisoners of conscience, arrested for their opinions and peaceful criticism of the government. Amnesty International is also concerned at the continued wave of arrests in Syria, which are apparently targeting human rights defenders and the activities of civil society groups and forums.

Hassan Sa'dun, a retired teacher from Qamishli in north Syria and 'Aref Dalilah, former dean of the faculty of economics of Aleppo university were reportedly arrested in Damascus. 'Aref Dalilah is an active member of the preparatory committee of the Civil Society Forum, a "pro-democracy movement" founded to work for political reform, participation and freedom of expression in Syria.

Dr Walid al-Bunni was arrested at his home in Damascus and Dr Kamal al-Labwani was also arrested at his home, in Zabadani (50kms north of Damascus). Both men reportedly took part in the organization of the political seminar held on 6 September, in the house of parliamentarian Riad Seif.

Habib Salih, a businessman and founder of a discussion group in Tartus (north-west of Syria) was arrested in his hometown. Earlier this year he had reportedly been summoned for interrogation and his group suspended as part of a clampdown by the Syrian authorities on groups exercising their right to freedom of expression and association.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals in English, French, Arabic or your own language:**

- calling for immediate and unconditional release of prisoners of conscience: Riad Seif, 'Aref Dalilah, Walid al-Bunni, Kamal al-Labwani, Habib Salih, Hassan Sa'dun;

- seeking assurances that they are being well treated in custody and not tortured or ill-treated;

- urging the authorities to ensure that they are allowed immediate access to their families, lawyers and any medical care they may need;

- expressing concern at reports that other human rights defenders and activists may face arrest and detention for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association.

**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**  
**Fax: + 963 11 224 6250**  
**Salutation:Your Excellency**

His Excellency  
Dr Muhammad Harba  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus  
Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Faxes: + 963 11 222 3428**  
**Telexes: 411016 AFIRS SY**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

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

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 23 October 2001