

PUBLIC

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"Disappearance"/Fear of Torture/
Incommunicado Detention

24 February 2000

SYRIA

Randa Ayyubi (f), 40, housewife
Mamduh Tatari, 46, agricultural engineer
Muhammad Adib Tatari, 15, schoolboy

A Syrian housewife and her family have "disappeared", apparently after she made an anti-government remark in the street. Randa Ayyubi was arrested on 17 October 1999, with her husband and eldest son. Since then their relatives, and Amnesty International, have appealed to the Syrian authorities for information, without success. The family are believed to be in incommunicado detention, where they are at risk of torture.

On 17 October Randa Ayyubi apparently shouted a criticism of the Syrian government in the street outside the family's apartment, in Rukn al-Din, Damascus. That evening security forces came to the apartment and arrested her, her husband Mamduh Tatari and their eldest son, Muhammad Adib, leaving their three other children, aged six, five, and 18 months, alone at home. The children are now being looked after by relatives.

The Tatari family are said not to belong to any political group.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of political prisoners are held incommunicado in Syrian prisons. Many prisoners "disappear" after arrest, and their families receive no news of them. It can take months or years for a family to find out where a relative is held; sometimes they never find out. Torture is routinely used against political detainees.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Arabic, French, English or your own language:

- asking why Randa Ayyubi, Mamduh Tatari, and Muhammad Adib Tatari were arrested, where they are detained and the law under which they are held;
- urging the Syrian Government to release them immediately and unconditionally, unless they are charged with a recognizable criminal offence;
- asking the Syrian government to ensure that they have immediate and regular access to the outside world, family, lawyers and doctors, and that they be treated humanely;
- expressing particular concern about the detention of Muhammad Adib Tatari, aged only 15 at the time of his arrest, and reminding Syria that, under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Syria is a state party, "The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time".

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
President Hafez al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: President, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 419160 prespl sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Lt. General Mustafa Talas
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Ommayyad Square
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: General Talas, Damascus, Syria

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

His Excellency Hussein Hassun
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Al Nasr Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Nasser Qaddur
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Al-Rashid Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Nasser Qaddur, Damascus, Syria
Faxes: +963 11 332 7620
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 6 April 2000.