

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 24/12/97

UA 233/97

Legal concern/Fear of torture

24 July 1997

SYRIAZubayda Muqabel (35) Press Officer

Zubayda Muqabel, a press officer at the office of Syrian Vice-President Rif'at al-Assad, was reportedly arrested on 7 July 1997 by members of the special security *al-Amn al-Khass* in Damascus. She was reportedly taken from her car near her office and has been detained since. The whereabouts of her detention are unknown and no charge has apparently been brought against her. She has not been allowed access to her family or a lawyer. Amnesty International is concerned that detainees in incommunicado detention may be at risk of ill-treatment or torture.

Zubayda Muqabel's father, Muhammad Muqabel, and two brothers, Khaled and Ayman Muqabel, were reportedly arrested on Monday evening in Aleppo, and were later released. They stated that they had not been ill-treated.

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

-expressing concern about the incommunicado detention of Zubayda Muqabel and urging that she be given immediate access to her family and lawyers;
-calling for her immediate and unconditional release, unless she is charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

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 Dr Muhammad Harba
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegram: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria
Salutation: Your Excellency

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

COPIES TO:

His Excellency Nasser Qaddur
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Al-Rashid Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

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Fax: + 963 11 224 5747

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 4 September 1997.