

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 24/04/93  
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To: Medical professionals  
From: Medical Office  
Date: 26 May 1993

*MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION*

**Kamel Hussain and Aktham Nu'aysa  
Syria**

**Keywords**

Theme: POCs/ill-health/detention without charge or trial/long-term imprisonment/unfair trial

**Summary**

Amnesty International is seeking guarantees of proper medical care for the two prisoners named above, both of whom have been adopted as prisoners of conscience, and is urging their immediate and unconditional release. Kamel Hussain, aged 65, has been imprisoned without charge or trial since 1971. Aktham Nu'aysa, aged 43, was sentenced in 1992 to nine years' imprisonment on political charges following torture and an unfair trial. See the attached information.

**Recommended Actions**

Letters from medical professionals, preferably written in Arabic, French, English, otherwise your own language, should be sent to the addresses below:

- stating that you are writing as a result of your concern for the well-being of Aktham Nu'aysa, detained in Sadnaya prison, and Kamel Hussain, detained in el-Mezze military prison, both of whom are reported to be in poor health;
- seeking information about their current state of health and about the medical attention and treatment they are receiving;
- urging that they be provided with any medical care they require;
- urging the authorities to release both prisoners in view of the fact that neither has used nor advocated violence and both appear to have been imprisoned solely as a result of their political views.

**Addresses**

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

His Excellency Abdallah Talaba  
 Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice  
 Nasr Street  
 Damascus  
 Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus,  
 Syria**  
**Telexes: 411018 AFIRS SY**

His Excellency Muhammad Harba  
 Minister of the Interior  
 Ministry of the Interior  
 Damascus  
 Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister,  
 Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 411018 AFIRS SY**

Nasir Qadur  
 Minister of State for Foreign Affairs  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Damascus  
 Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Damascus,  
 Syria**  
**Telexes: 411922 AFIRS SY**

**Copies to**

[For Aktham Nu'aysa]:

Director  
 Sadnaya Military Prison  
 Sadnaya  
 Syrian Arab Republic

The President  
 Ordre des médecins syriens  
 Place de l'Etoile  
 Damascus  
 Syrian Arab Republic

and to Syrian diplomatic representatives in your country

[For Kamel Hussain]:

Director  
 al-Mezze Military Prison  
 al-Mezze  
 Damascus  
 Syrian Arab Republic

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*MEDICAL CONCERN*

**Kamel Hussain and Aktham Nu'aysa  
Syria**

Amnesty International is concerned for the two prisoners named above, both of whom have been adopted as prisoners of conscience and are reported to be in poor health. Kamel Hussain, aged 65, has been imprisoned without charge or trial for almost 22 years following his arrest after the 1970 coup which brought to power the current president, Hafez al-Assad. Aktham Nu'aysa, a 43-year-old lawyer, was sentenced in 1992 to nine years' imprisonment on political charges following torture and an unfair trial. Amnesty International is seeking guarantees that the two men will be provided with proper medical attention without further delay and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

**Kamel Hussain**

Kamel Hussain, a former diplomat and member of the Regional Command of the Syrian Ba'th Party, was arrested in June or July 1971. He was one of a group of former government and Ba'th Party officials arrested following the coup d'état of November 1970. At the time of writing, 13 of those imprisoned following the coup remain in al-Mezze Military Prison in Damascus without charge or trial. Some of the original group of detainees have been released, a significant proportion on health grounds. Two of those released in August 1992 subsequently died within months of their release - Dr Nour al-Din al-Atassi, the former President and Prime Minister who died of cancer of the oesophagus in December 1992, and Muhammad Rabah al-Tawil, who died in April 1993. The most recent release from this group of prisoners was that of Hakem al-Faiz, abducted from Lebanon and imprisoned in al-Mezze prison in 1971; he was released in January 1993.

Kamel Hussain is reported to be suffering from tuberculosis (further details not available) and from rheumatism; he is also reported to have injuries to one of his feet caused by *falaqa* (beating to the soles of the feet) reportedly inflicted in 1986. He is over 65-years-old and there is concern that he may not have access to adequate medical care.

**Aktham Nu'aysa**

Aktham Nu'aysa, was one of a group of 17 people arrested in December 1991 and January 1992 in connection with a leaflet issued by the the Committees for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria (CDF). The leaflet contained criticisms of human rights violations and of the procedure for the re-election of President al-Assad in December 1991. The CDF had been campaigning for the abolition of the State of Emergency in Syria which has

now been in force for over 30 years, for the release of all political prisoners and for a greater respect for individual freedoms. Under emergency legislation, the security forces enjoy wide powers of arrest and the legislation has, in practice, been grossly abused, resulting in widespread arbitrary arrests.

Aktham Nu'aysa is reported to have been severely tortured following his arrest and in early January 1992 he was admitted to Harasta Military Hospital in Damascus. At the time of his trial he was still visibly in a poor state and unable to walk unaided.

The 17 were tried by the Supreme State Security Court in February and March 1992 and 14 defendants were convicted and sentenced to prison terms. The charges brought against them were dissemination of false information; receiving money from abroad and the withholding of information. Four were, however, amnestied and released in late May 1992. The remaining ten are serving sentences ranging from five to ten years' imprisonment imposed after a trial which fell far short of international standards for fair trial. Aktham Nu'aysa was sentenced to nine years imprisonment. None of the group are known to have used or advocated violence and all have been adopted as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International.

Aktham Nu'aysa is again reported to be in need of medical care, although few details are as yet available. He is said to have a partial paralysis of one hand and of the right leg. It is believed that he may have a vertebral disc problem, though information on this is at present unclear. In addition, his eyesight is said to be failing and his eyes constantly inflamed.

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Amnesty International is urging that Kamel Hussain and Aktham Nu'aysa are provided with proper medical care without further delay and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

For further details of political imprisonment in Syria, please see *Syria: Indefinite Political Imprisonment*, AI Publications, MDE 24/12/92, July 1992.