

# URGENT ACTION

## THREE MEN HELD INCOMMUNICADO RISK TORTURE

**Anwer Naso, Hassan Saleh, Ma'rouf Mulla Ahmed and Muhammad Ahmed Mustafa are all reported to have been brought before a military prosecutor in Damascus on 19 April. Anwer Naso was released without charge three days later, on 22 April, but the three others remain in detention apparently under investigation.**

Hassan Saleh, Ma'rouf Mulla Ahmed and Muhammad Ahmed Mustafa, all senior members of the Kurdish Yekiti Party in Syria, which has not been legally authorized by the Syrian authorities, were arrested in late December 2009, together with Anwer Naso. They were held in solitary confinement for nine days by Political Security officials in al-Hasakah, north-east Syria, and interrogated, then transferred to Political Security's al-Fayha' branch in Damascus on 4 January, 2010.

Anwer Naso is reported to have been assaulted and beaten on the soles of his feet while in detention. Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of Hassan Saleh, Ma'rouf Mulla Ahmed and Muhammad Ahmed Mustafa, who continue to be held incommunicado and are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Although the Syrian authorities have not disclosed the reasons for the arrests or the charges being brought against Hassan Saleh, Ma'rouf Mulla Ahmed and Muhammad Ahmed Mustafa, leaders of political organizations advocating for greater rights for Syria's Kurdish minority are generally charged with "aiming at separating part of the Syrian lands". If this is the case they may be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully expressing their political opinions.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Welcoming the release of Anwer Naso but expressing concern that Hassan Saleh, Ma'rouf Mulla Ahmed and Muhammad Ahmed Mustafa continue to be held and may be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression;
- Calling for the three men to be released immediately and unconditionally if they are prisoners of conscience, or else released without delay unless they are to be tried fairly and promptly on recognizable criminal charges;
- Asking for assurances that they are being humanely treated and that they be given immediate access to lawyers of their choice, access to their families and any medical treatment they may require.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JUNE 2010 TO:

#### President

Bashar al-Assad  
 Presidential Palace  
 al-Rashid Street  
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 332 3410**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Minister of Defence

His Excellency Lieutenant-General Ali  
 Ben-Mohammed Habib Mahmoud  
 Ministry of Defence  
 Omayyad Square  
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 2119729**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Minister of Interior

Major Sa'id Mohamed Samour  
 Ministry of Interior  
 'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street  
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 222 3428**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 26/10. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/001/2010/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/001/2010/en)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Following their arrest in December 2009, the four men are reported to have been held in solitary confinement at al-Hasakah Political Security branch for nine days, during which they received only one meal each day and were subject to lengthy interrogation sessions late into the night. The questioning is reported to have focussed around their activities on behalf of the Yekiti Party, which had held a conference on 3 December 2009 in which the participants called for the Kurdish areas of Syria to be granted autonomy.

After they were moved to al-Fayha' Political Security branch in Damascus on 4 January 2010, the four men were subject to further interrogation, during which they were often kept blindfolded and handcuffed. While conditions remained harsh, they were better than at al-Hasakah – for example, they received three meals, were allowed short exercise breaks and were seen twice weekly by medical doctors. All three men who continue to be detained suffer from various ailments: Hassan Saleh and Muhammad Ahmed Mustafa both require regular medication for thyroid and other problems and Ma'rouf Mulla Ahmed suffers from a slipped disc in his back.

To date, the men's families have not been permitted to visit them, despite their requests to do so, though at least two of them have been allowed to send in fresh clothes and medicine to their detained relatives.

Further information UA: 26/10 Index: MDE 24/011/2010 Issue Date: 18 May 2010

