

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/Health Concern

25 July 1991

KUWAIT:

Doctor Nazmi Salim Khurshid

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at reports that a Palestinian doctor, Nazmi Salim Khurshid, is in a coma and near to death as a result of severe beatings by Kuwait security forces following his arrest on 10 March 1991. As far as Amnesty International is aware, Dr Khurshid, who also suffers from paralysis of the left leg, is being held without charge or trial. His family has not seen him since his arrest. His precise whereabouts are unknown, and it is not known whether he has received any medical attention.

Dr Khurshid was arrested on 10 March 1991 at his place of work at al-'Ardiyyah Hospital, along with several other Palestinian doctors. He was initially held at al-'Ardiyyah police station for three days, and was subsequently transferred to the State Security Prison, on or about 13 March 1991. Dr Khurshid's relatives have since received contradictory information about his condition in detention. On 25 May 1991, they were informed by two individuals with access to the prison that after his transferral to the State Security Prison, he lost consciousness and died on 14 March 1991 as a result of beatings to the chest and head. Subsequent information received suggested that Dr Khurshid was not dead, but that he was in a critical condition. He was said to be in a coma, suffering from paralysis and unable to speak. On 17 July 1991, he was reported to be close to death.

Dr Nazmi Khurshid was born in May 1945. He is a Palestinian and holds a Lebanese travel document. He is married to a Jordanian woman and has four children. He left Lebanon for Kuwait in 1974, and in 1975 began work as a medical doctor at al-'Ardiyyah Infirmary under the auspices of the Ministry of Health.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has received reports that hundreds of people from various Arab nationalities including Iraqis, Palestinians and Jordanians have been arbitrarily arrested in Kuwait since 26 February 1991. In most cases, relatives have not been informed of their whereabouts or the reasons for their arrest, despite repeated attempts to make such enquiries with the local authorities.

Scores of people have simply "disappeared". Amnesty International fears that many of them may have been arrested for allegedly "collaborating" with the Iraqi occupation forces and are being held in secret or incommunicado detention where they could be subjected to torture during interrogation. Many such detainees are believed to be held without charge or trial.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- urging immediate clarification of whether Dr Nazmi Khurshid is alive or dead;
- if he is alive, expressing grave concern that he was reportedly beaten to the point of unconsciousness and that he is now in a coma, and urging that he be given immediate access to adequate medical care;
- urging that an immediate and impartial investigation be made into allegations that he was tortured while held at the State Security Prison, and calling for those found responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging that he be granted immediate access to his family, and to appropriate

international humanitarian organizations;

- expressing concern that he has apparently been held without charge or trial since 10 March 1991 and urging that he be immediately released, unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- requesting information regarding the legal basis for the arrest and continued detention of Dr Nazmi Khurshid.

APPEALS TO:

N.B. Due to the continuing difficulties of postal communication with Kuwait, appeals should be directed to Kuwaiti diplomatic representatives in your country. You may also request that your letters/telexes to the authorities listed below be forwarded to them by the Kuwait embassy in your country.

Appeals should, where possible, be sent by **fax** via the Kuwait Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to the authorities listed below:

Fax No. of the Kuwait Embassy, Riyadh: + 966 1 488 3682

Please forward to:

- His Highness Shaikh Jaber al-Ahmad Al-Sabah
Emir of Kuwait
- His Highness Shaikh Sa'ad al-'Abdallah Al-Sabah
Crown Prince
- His Excellency Hammud al-Jaber Al-Sabah
Minister of the Interior
- His Excellency Mr Ghazi al-Sammar
Minister of Justice
- Mr Hamed al-'Othman
Attorney General and acting Public Prosecutor

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 September 1991.