

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture/Incommunicado Detention

9 January 1992

SYRIA:

**Aktham Nu'aysa
and six others**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about reports alleging that Aktham Nu'aysa, a lawyer from Lataqiyya, has been tortured in detention and has, as a result, been admitted to Harasta Military Hospital, near Damascus.

Aktham Nu'aysa, aged about 41, is reported to have been arrested in Lataqiyya on 18 December 1991 by members of al-Mukhabarat al-'Askariyya (Military Intelligence) and has since been held incommunicado with no access to a lawyer or to his family. He is known to suffer from a kidney complaint for which he may require urgent medical attention.

He was arrested with at least six others in connection with a written statement issued on 10 December 1991 by the Committees for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria. The statement is said to have contained criticism of the recent re-election of President Hafez al-Assad. The six detainees include Muhammad 'Ali Habib, a 34-year-old employee of the University of Lataqiyya, and Amjad Bahbuha, also from Lataqiyya. Amnesty International does not have the names and details of the other four detainees. All of them are reported to be held incommunicado in Damascus, but their exact whereabouts are unknown to Amnesty International.

None of the seven detainees is known to have used or advocated violence and all may be held solely for having peacefully exercised their right to freedom of expression.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing grave concern over reports of Aktham Nu'aysa having been tortured; requesting that this allegation be immediately investigated, that the findings be made public and if the reports are confirmed, those found responsible for the torture be brought to justice;

- seeking information about the names and personal details of the four people not known to Amnesty International and any others arrested in the same connection, the reasons for their arrest, and their current places of detention;

- asking for their immediate release unless they are to be charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence;

- requesting that all detainees be given prompt access to their families and lawyers, and that all necessary medical care be provided.

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APPEALS TO:

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Muhammad Harba
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Khaled al-Ansari
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Faruq al-Shar'a
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegram: Foreign Affairs Minister, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 411922

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Dr. Iyad al-Shatti
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
al-Majlis al-Niyabi Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Health Minister, Damascus, Syria

Telexes: health 412655 sy

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Dr. M. Cherif Bakle
Ordre des Mediciens Syriens
Place de l'Etoile
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

and to diplomatic representatives of Syria in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 February 1992.