

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 145/98 (MDE 24/02/98, 7 May 1998) - Medical concern / Prisoners of Conscience

SYRIA 'Abdalla Qabbara, aged 60, a lawyer
Nu'man 'Abdu, former student
Juryus al-Talli, aged over 60
Jalal Ali Masu'd, aged 48
Akram Wajih al-Bunni, aged 42
Faysal 'Allush, aged 40
Marwan Hammad al-'Ali, aged 36
Munir Sha'bu, aged 35 (released)

Amnesty International has learned that prisoner of conscience Munir Sha'bu, who suffers from serious medical problems, was released in May 1998. His release came at the same time as that of 29 other prisoners of conscience and political prisoners.

All of the above-named were arrested in connection with their involvement in opposition political activities and sentenced to a minimum of 10 years imprisonment. Munir Sha'bu was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in 1993.

Information concerning the names of others released, however, is difficult to obtain and it is not known at present if they include any of the above-named.

Media reports suggest that more than 300 additional prisoners may have been released but this has not been officially confirmed yet. No reason for the releases has been given by the Syrian authorities.

Also released were Khalil Brayez and Riad al-Turk, two prominent prisoners of conscience who had been detained for over 27 and 18 years respectively.

Amnesty International will update the Urgent Action network as soon as other information becomes available. In the meantime no further action is required. Many thanks to all who took part in this appeal.