

PUBLIC

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18 February 2005

Further Information on UA 15/05 (MDE 24/003/2005, 19 January 2005) - Torture and ill-treatment/possible unfair trial

SYRIA

- 'Ammar 'Umar (m)
- Kahdar Khaled (m)
- Mas'ud Khaled (m)
- Hasan'Umar (m)
- Murad Aslan (m)
- Daglash Khalil (m)
- Shenidar Muhammad Yusuf (m)
- Shiyar Muhammad Yusuf (m)
- Zerdeshta Muhammad Yusuf (m)
- Zibar Muhammad Yusuf (m)
- Tawfiq Husayn (m)
- Manal 'Abdi (m)
- Diyar'Ali (m)
- Juwan Khaled (m)
- Jivara Shukri (m)

The 15 Syrian Kurds named above were sentenced to prison terms on 15 February, after a grossly unfair trial before the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC). Kahdar Khaled, Mas'ud Khaled, Shenidar Muhammad Yusuf and Shiyar Muhammad Yusuf were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, while the 11 others were sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

After the trial, one of the defence lawyers repeated the allegation that the convictions were based on statements obtained through torture. To Amnesty International's knowledge, the SSSC has never investigated any of the hundreds of allegations over the years that "confessions" used as evidence in court had been extracted under torture.

All 15 are still believed to be held in 'Adra Prison, near the capital, Damascus. They were detained during mass arrests across the country that followed clashes which began at a football match in the northeastern town of Qamishli between a Kurdish and an Arab team.

Many thanks to all who took action on this case. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation of the detainees, and take further action as necessary. If possible, please send a final round of appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic, French or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that the 15 men named above (giving their names) have been sentenced to up to three years' imprisonment after a grossly unfair trial before the SSSC on the basis of "confessions" reportedly extracted under torture;
- calling for these reports of torture to be investigated, for anyone responsible to be brought to justice, and for any evidence obtained as a result of torture to be discounted;
- reminding the authorities that as a state party to the Convention Against Torture, Syria is obliged to review all of its legislation and practices to bring them into line with the requirements of the Convention, and ensure that all its provisions are fully implemented;
- calling for the 15 detainees to be released or promptly re-tried by a court whose standards meet international standards for fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President Bashar al-Assad
President of the Republic
Presidential Palace
Abu Rummaneh, Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: + 963 11 332 3410

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency General Ghazi Kan'an
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax + 963 11 222 3428

Email: somi@net.sy

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Syria accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 April 2005.