

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/011/2008

26 February 2008

UA 53/08 Fear for safety/ Fear of torture or ill-treatment

SYRIA Dr. Kamal al-Mwayel (m), aged 46, former political prisoner, physician

Former political prisoner Kamal al-Mwayel was summoned to the Military Security Branch in Damascus on 21 February 2008 and has not been seen since. He is believed to have been detained and is considered at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Kamal al-Mwayel's detention may be connected to his attendance at a meeting of the pro-democracy umbrella group Damascus Declaration for Democratic National Change (DDDNC) on 1 December 2007. Twelve other people who also attended the meeting are all currently being detained. Eleven are held under harsh conditions at 'Adra prison, whilst a twelfth is currently in hospital as a result of the conditions under which she was held. (See UA 333/07, MDE 24/045/2007, 17 December 2007 and follow-ups).

Kamal al-Mwayel was previously imprisoned from 1982 to 1989 for his involvement with Muslim Brotherhood, which is an illegal organisation in Syria.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The DDDNC is an unauthorised umbrella group of opposition and pro-democracy groups. The government began to crack down on the grouping on 9 December 2007: 47 DDDNC members have been arrested so far, of whom 34 were released within a few days. None of the 34 is known to have been charged.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic, French or your own language:

- expressing concern that Kamal al-Mwayel was summoned to the Military Security Branch on 21 February 2008 and is believed to have been detained;
- seeking clarification of his current legal status, reason for his arrest and place of imprisonment;
- expressing concern that he may have been detained on account of his legitimate exercise of his human rights, including his right to freedom of expression which the Syrian government, as a state party to the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), is bound to uphold;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that he is treated humanely, with full respect for his human rights, and that he is not subject at any time to torture or other ill-treatment;
- urging the authorities to immediately ensure that while in detention, he is granted access to lawyers, his family and any medical treatment that he may require;
- urging that he is released immediately and unconditionally unless he is to be charged and brought to trial promptly and fairly on recognizably criminal charges.

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency 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 General Hassan Ali Turkmani

Ministry of Defence

Omayyad Square
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 223 7842
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice
His Excellency Muhammad al-Ghafari
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 666 2460
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs
His Excellency Walid Mu'allim
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: + 963 11 3327620
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 8 April 2008.