

PUBLIC

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27 March 2000

Further information on UA 145/98 (MDE 24/02/98, 7 May 1998; MDE 24/07/98, 10 June 1998; MDE 24/13/98, 11 August 1998) - Medical concern/Prisoners of conscience/Fear of torture or ill-treatment

SYRIA Nu'man 'Ali 'Abdu, journalist  
Jurays al-Talli, retired teacher  
Salama George Kayla, writer and journalist  
Mahmud 'Isa, English language teacher

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On 21 March 2000, prisoner of conscience Salama George Kayla, a Palestinian writer and journalist, was released from Tadmur Military Prison. He had served 8 years in prison with hard labour.

All of the above received sentences of up to 15 years imprisonment in connection with their involvement in the Party for Communist Action and their peaceful opposition to the Syrian Government.

Salama George Kayla was sentenced by the Syrian Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) after an unfair trial on charges of opposing the government.

An Urgent Action was issued on their behalf after they were transferred to Tadmur Military Prison where it was feared they would be at risk of torture and ill-treatment and because of health concerns - Salama George Kayla was believed to suffer from high blood pressure.

The conditions in Tadmur prison are very harsh. The prison is in the desert and has poor ventilation and facilities for personal hygiene. Prisoners are held incommunicado with no access to their families.

Amnesty International is continuing appeals on behalf of the other three prisoners named above through long-term action techniques.

**No further action is required by the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**