

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/012/2009

6 May 2009

Further information on UA 90/09 (MDE 24/007/2009, 30 March 2009), and update (MDE 24/09/2009, 9 April 2009) Fear of torture or other ill-treatment

SYRIA Maryam Kallis (f), aged 36, UK national

Maryam Kallis received a second visit from two members of staff of the British Consulate in Damascus on 23 April. The meeting took place in the presence of an officer of the Syrian security forces at a detention centre in Kafr Sousa, Damascus. The Consulate staff were allowed to see her for around 15 minutes, having asked to visit her when delivering food and toiletries, among other items, to the detention centre.

It is not known which security branch is holding Maryam Kallis. She has apparently been moved several times during her detention.

Maryam Kallis appeared frail and fatigued during her meeting with the Consulate staff. According to the authorities detaining her, she is being treated daily by a doctor as an apparently routine measure. She has been held without charge for 46 days and a reason for her detention has not been provided.

Amnesty International remains seriously concerned for Maryam Kallis' health. She remains at risk of being subjected to torture or other ill-treatment whilst in detention. She continues to be denied access to her family or legal representation.

Background

Maryam Kallis arrived in Syria from the UK on 5 March and had been staying with her sister before her arrest on 15 March 2009. She had returned to Syria to collect her three children, who were staying in Damascus with her sister and who are aged between five and eight years. She intended to return with them to London at the end of March but was arrested by around 10 men in plain clothes in the Rukna al-Din area of Damascus. She was with her eight-year-old son at the time and was taken back with him to her sister's apartment, where her passport and those of her children were confiscated. She was then taken away to detention.

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

- calling on the authorities to release Maryam Kallis immediately and unconditionally unless she is charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Maryam Kallis is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- welcoming the news that Maryam Kallis has been given access to British Consulate staff for the second time and urging that she be permitted regular visits from UK representatives in Damascus as well as immediate access to her family and to a lawyer of her choosing.

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 Interior

His Excellency Sa'id Sammour
Ministry of Interior
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 2223428

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 Ahmad Yunis
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 666 2460

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 17 June 2009.