

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/14/00

27 April 2000

Further information on UA 238/98 (MDE 24/15/98, 10 September 1998) - Medical concern/prisoner of conscience

SYRIANNizar Nayyuf

Prisoner of conscience and human rights defender Nizar Nayyuf was released on 22 or 23 April, having served eight years of a 10-year sentence.

He had been imprisoned for his involvement with the unauthorized Committees for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights (CDF), after a grossly unfair trial before the Syrian Supreme State Security Court.

Three other prisoners of conscience were released at the same time. 'Abd al-Halim Remieh, Basel Hurani and 'Isam Dimashqi, imprisoned for their involvement with the unauthorised Party for Communist Action, had been held for years after their 15-year sentences had expired.

During his detention Nizar Nayyuf had been held in three military prisons, including Tadmur, notorious for its harsh conditions. He has been seriously ill, suffering ruptured discs, apparently caused by torture on the "German Chair" (a metal chair with moving parts, which stretches the spine and causes severe pressure on the victim's neck and legs.

In recent years Nizar Nayyuf has received a number of awards for his work as a human rights defender, from organisations including Amnesty International's Tunisian section and *Reporters sans Frontières*.

Many thanks to all those who took part in this appeal. No further action is needed.