

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 231/08 (MDE 24/026/2008, 19 August 2008) Fear of torture or other ill-treatment

SYRIA Mesha'l al-Tammo (m), aged 51, Kurdish political activist

On 26 August, political activist Mesha'l al-Tammo was transferred from a detention centre run by the Political Security Branch in the capital, Damascus, to 'Adra Prison in the same city. His whereabouts had been unknown since the early hours of 15 August, when he was arrested by the Syrian Air Force Security at a checkpoint between the northern city of 'Ein al-'Arab, known in Kurdish as Kobani (not as Qobani as written in the original UA), and his home in the city of Aleppo. He was later transferred to the custody of the Political Security Branch, which is responsible for investigating the activities of suspected political dissidents.

On 27 August, Mesha'l al-Tammo was brought before an investigating judge in Damascus. He was charged with a number of offences under the Syrian Penal Code, including joining an "international organization without the permission of the government", "conspiracy", committing "an attack to provoke civil war or sectarian fighting through arming Syrians or encouraging them to arm themselves against each other or inciting killings and looting", and "inciting sectarian strife". If convicted, Mesha'l al-Tammo may face the death penalty.

According to Amnesty International's information Mesha'l al-Tammo was not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment while in the custody of the Syrian Air Force Security or the Political Security Branch. He was, however, verbally insulted and his car is still being held by the Syrian authorities.

According to Syrian human rights organizations and Syrian Kurdish political parties, Mesha'l al-Tammo, a member of Syria's Kurdish minority, is being detained because of his activities as spokesperson of the Kurdish Future Current (*Sepela Kurdi – Syria*), an unauthorized political party. Mesha'l al-Tammo is also a member of the Committees for the Revival of the Civil Society, an unauthorized pro-reform network of Syrians who meet to discuss human rights and political matters.

No further action is requested from the UA network at present. Amnesty International will monitor Mesha'l al-Tammo's case and take further action as necessary. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.