

**PUBLIC**

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**12 May 2004**

**Further Information on UA 129/04 (MDE 24/023/2004, 26 March 2004) Possible prisoner of conscience/torture and ill-treatment/medical concern**

**SYRIA Hassan Watfi, (m), aged 42**

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Human rights activist Hassan Watfi was released from detention on 9 May.

Reports indicate that his arrest on 16 March 2004 and subsequent detention were linked with his participation in a peaceful demonstration against Syria's state of emergency laws and for the release of political prisoners. It is not known as yet how he was treated during his detention.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In addition to being a member of the Syria-based Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR), Hassan Watfi is a member of the Committees for the Defence of Democratic Liberties and Human Rights (CDDLHR). His colleague in the CDDLHR, Ahmad Khazim, was arrested on 15 March and released along with Hassan Watfi. It has been reported that both had been sentenced to 55 days in jail. However, the head of the CDDLHR, Aktham Nu'ayse, remains held in solitary confinement in Sednaya prison, following his arrest on 13 April 2004.

In addition to spearheading a campaign for the lifting of the state of emergency, the CDDLHR had recently published an annual report of human rights violations in Syria and reported violations of human rights of Syria's Kurdish population in March and April. Aktham Nu'aysa had expressed concerns for the fate of scores of Lebanese "disappeared" in Syria.

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