

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 25/10/96

UA 244/96 Fear of torture / Possible prisoners of conscience 24 October 1996

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Jassim 'Issa al-Yassi, customs inspector, aged about 25
Ahmad 'Abdullah Makki, soldier, aged about 27
Yassir 'Abdullah Makki, municipal worker, aged about 25, brother of Ahmad
'Abdullah Makki

Amnesty International has just been informed that the three men named above are being held in prolonged incommunicado detention in Dubai. The organization fears that they may be facing torture or ill-treatment and will remain at risk of such treatment as long as they are held without access to the outside world.

The three, together with a fourth man, Ja'far Hassan Sahwan, a Bahraini national sought by the Bahraini government as a political suspect, were arrested in early June 1996 in Dubai and taken to an undisclosed place. Shortly afterwards Ja'far Hassan Sahwan was reportedly handed over to the authorities in Bahrain where he is believed to be currently held. The other three, all UAE nationals, remained in incommunicado detention. Although they were allowed one brief visit each by their families in July, they are reported to have been allowed no further visits. They have had no access to a lawyer, in breach of UAE law, which states that detainees should have access to legal counsel at all times. Their current whereabouts are unclear.

The exact reasons for their arrests are unknown, but Amnesty International is concerned that they may be prisoners of conscience, detained solely because of their relationship to Ja'far Hassan Sahwan. The latter escaped from Bahrain in 1995 and went to the UAE in order to avoid arrest in Bahrain following demonstrations and protests there which were met by mass arrests, torture and killing by security forces (see *Bahrain: A Human Rights Crisis*, MDE 11/16/95).

Three of Ja'far Hassan Sahwan's brothers were arrested following those events. Two are believed to be still held without trial, while the third is said to have been sentenced to 10 or 15 years' imprisonment after unfair trial. Ja'far Hassan Sahwan was previously imprisoned in Bahrain in the 1980's as a political activist.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- expressing concern at the prolonged incommunicado detention of Jassim 'Issa al-Yassi, Ahmad 'Abdullah Makki and Yassir 'Abdullah Makki, and calling for them to have immediate and continuing access to lawyers of their choice in accordance with United Arab Emirates law;
- seeking assurances that they are being treated humanely in accordance with international standards, and urging that they be granted immediate access to family members and any medical care they may need;
- seeking clarification of the reasons for their arrest and calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they are not to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences and given fair trials in accordance with international standards.

APPEALS TO:

His Highness
al-Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates
Ruler of Abu Dhabi

Manhal Palace
PO Box 280, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Telexes: 22220 PALACE EM
Telegrams: President Al-Nahyan, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Salutation: Your Highness

His Excellency
General Mohammad Saeed al-Badi
Minister of Interior
PO Box 398
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Faxes: +9712 415 688
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Highness
Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid al-Maktoum
Crown Prince
Ruler of Dubai
PO Box 899, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Telexes: 23245
Telegrams: Crown Prince, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Salutation: Your Highness

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of United Arab Emirates accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 December 1996.