

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 21/00

Forcible return / Fear of torture or ill-treatment 7 March 2000

LIBYA/JORDAN

Sami Muhammad Sami
'Abd al-Hafez Muhammad al-Naggar
Ashraf Sulayman al-Hamrouni
Iman 'Awad Khabouli
Gamal Mabrouk Abu Sha'ala
'Adel Salim Kakouka
Iman Muhammad 'Attiya

In the last three weeks the seven Libyan men named above have reportedly been forcibly returned to Libya from Jordan under suspicion of being sympathizers of Islamist groups. Amnesty International is very concerned for their safety in Libya where political opposition is not tolerated and political detainees routinely tortured.

All seven men were long-time residents in Jordan - six were married to Jordanian women and had children. They had been arrested on 4 January 2000.

On 7 March a Jordanian official reportedly said that they had been found distributing leaflets critical of the Libyan authorities. An official Jordanian source also said that the Kingdom had deported them: "acting upon Jordan's firm principle that it would not allow any person to use its territory as a base for any action against any Arab country...its commitment to fight all forms of terrorism that target Jordan or any Arab state".

Their arrest and deportation appears to be linked to a crackdown by the Jordanian authorities on members of Islamist groups - at least 60 suspected members of Islamist groups have been arrested in the last three months and held for up to 60 days in incommunicado detention in the General Intelligence Department (GID). Some have since been released; others remain detained on charges including membership of an unregistered organization and are possible prisoners of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Political detainees in Libya are routinely tortured in incommunicado detention to extract confessions later used to incriminate them. Alleged methods of torture include beating, hanging detainees by the wrist from a high ceiling, chaining them to a wall for hours, clubbing, suspending them from a pole inserted between the knees and elbows, electric shocks, burning them with cigarettes and setting aggressive dogs onto them.

Amnesty International has documented many cases of Libyans, including cases of refugees returned to Libya, who were arrested on arrival, tortured and are still in detention without charge or trial.

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

To the Libyan authorities:

- urging the Libyan Government to confirm reports that seven Libyan nationals (please name them), have been returned to Libya from Jordan and to make public their whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that, if detained, all seven are humanely treated and given regular access to lawyers of their own choosing and to their families;
- asking that they be released immediately unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

To the Jordanian authorities:

- condemning the forcible return of seven Libyan nationals (please name them),
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- urging the Jordanian government to respect its international obligations under the United Nation's Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which it acceded in 1991, and to ensure that no person is forcibly returned to a country where they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment;

- urging the Jordanian government to seek assurances from the Libyan authorities that the seven men will not be subjected to human rights violations.

APPEALS TO LIBYAN AUTHORITIES:

His Excellency Mu'ammur al-Gaddafi

Leader of the Revolution

Office of the Leader of the Revolution

Tripoli

Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Telegrams: Colonel al-Gaddafi, Tripoli, Libya

Telexes: 70 0901 20162 ALKHASU LY

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Muhammad Bilqasim al-Zawi

Secretary of the People's Committee for Justice and General Security

Secretariat of the People's Committee for Justice and General Security

Tripoli

Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Telegrams: Muhammad al-Zawi, Tripoli, Libya

Salutation: Your Excellency

APPEALS TO JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES:

His Majesty King 'Abdallah bin Hussein

Office of HM the King

Royal Palace

Amman

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Telegrams: King 'Abdallah, Amman, Jordan

Faxes: + 962 6 463 4755

Salutation: Your Majesty

Brigadier Zaher al-Fawaz,

Director of Public Security

PO Box 935

Amman

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Faxes: + 962 6 463 0322

Salutation: Dear Brigadier al-Fawaz

COPIES TO:

The Human Rights Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Council of Ministers
Amman, Jordan
Faxes: + 962 6 464 2520

The Human Rights Office
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Amman, Jordan
Faxes: + 962 6 464 8825

and to diplomatic representatives of JORDAN/LIBYA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 April 2000.