

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 116/91 (MDE 24/02/91, 28 March 1991) - Legal Concern

SYRIA:Eli Swed, Selim Swed

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Amnesty International has learned that Eli and Selim Swed were sentenced on 21 May 1991 to six and a half years' imprisonment. According to the reports received, the final hearing of their trial was held in camera and lasted only a few minutes; neither the defendants nor their lawyer were allowed to speak. As far as Amnesty International is aware, no charges have ever been made public by the authorities, although earlier reports indicated that the two were being tried on charges of espionage or treason. No other details of the trial proceedings or the verdict are known to Amnesty International.

Eli and Selim Swed, members of the Syrian Jewish community, were arrested in November and December 1987 respectively, and held incommunicado for almost two years. Their families were first allowed to visit them in 'Adra Civil Prison near Damascus in October 1989. Their trial is reported to have begun in November 1990 and to have been adjourned on several occasions. One session is reported to have taken place in camera on 5 March 1991.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/airmail letters:**

- seeking confirmation of reports that Eli and Selim Swed were sentenced on 21 May to six and a half years' imprisonment;
- expressing concern at reports that the trial sessions were held in camera, and that the charges against the defendants have never been made public;
- requesting details of the charges on which they have been convicted and the legislation on which the charges were based, as well as details of the trial proceedings and of any right of appeal to a higher tribunal;
- seeking assurances that Eli and Selim Swed are being treated humanely, in accordance with internationally recognized standards for the treatment of all prisoners.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam  
Vice-President  
Office of the President  
Presidential Palace  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Telegrams: Vice-President Khaddam, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: PRESPL 419160 SY**

His Excellency Khaled al-Ansari  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Nasr Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria**

His Excellency Muhammad Harba  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**

**COPIES TO:**

Maitre Hassan Hamdan  
President of the Syrian Bar Association  
rue Mayssaloun  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

and to diplomatic representatives of Syria in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 12 July 1991.