

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 24/05/93

Distrib: PG/SC

10 August 1993

FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL LETTER-WRITING ACTION

(See MDE 24/04/93 - 26 May 1993)

**Kamel Hussain, Aktham Nu'aysa and others
SYRIA**

In May 1993 appeals were issued on behalf of Kamel Hussain and Aktham Nu'aysa, two prisoners of conscience adopted by Amnesty International who at the time were both reported to be in need of medical care. Amnesty International has now learned that Kamel Hussain has been released after 22 years' imprisonment. Aktham Nu'aysa, who was arrested in January 1992 and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment is now receiving hospital treatment for a number of health problems he has been suffering since arrest.

Kamel Hussain

Kamel Hussain, now aged about 66, is one of a group of former government and Ba'th Party officials held without charge or trial since their arrest shortly after the 1970 coup which brought President Hafez al-Assad to power. Kamel Hussain, who was a diplomat under the former government, is reported to have been suffering from tuberculosis. He was released at the end of June 1993 together with another four from this group of detainees: Marwan Habache, Muhammad Sa'id Talib, Mejalli Nasrawin and Hassan al-Khatib. There are now eight of the original group who remain in prison over 22 years since their arrest. Although some of the original group have been released in recent years, a significant proportion on health grounds, two died within months of their release, including former President Dr Nour al-Din al-Atassi who died of cancer in December 1992.

Those remaining in detention are Muhammad 'Id 'Ashawi, Salah Jadid, Dafi Jam'ani, 'Abd al-Hamid Miqdad, Hadithe Murade, 'Adel Na'issa, Fawzi Rida, and Mustafa Rustum.

Aktham Nu'aysa

Aktham Nu'aysa is one of 10 people arrested in late 1991/early 1992 in connection with a leaflet issued by the Committees for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria (CDF). All are adopted as prisoners of conscience. The CDF leaflet contained criticisms of human rights violations in Syria and of the procedure for the re-election of President al-Assad in December 1991. The CDF had been campaigning for an end to the State of Emergency in Syria which has now been in force for over 30 years.

Aktham Nu'aysa, aged around 42, is a lawyer by profession. He is reported to have been severely tortured following his arrest and to have suffered a partial paralysis of the right leg and of one hand; in addition, he was said to have had kidney problems prior to his arrest. He is now receiving treatment in Sadnaya hospital and since commencing treatment his mobility is reported to have improved and he is able to walk more freely, although he is still said to be suffering from "inflammation of the kidneys" and from visual problems.

Those arrested together with Aktham Nu'aysa are Nizar Nayyuf, 'Afif Muzhir, Muhammad 'Ali Habib, Bassam al-Shaykh, Thabit Murad, Hassan 'Ali, Hussam Salama, Jadi' Nawfal and Ya'qub Musa. They are serving sentences of between five and ten years imposed after unfair hearings in March 1992.

Amnesty International is continuing to appeal for the release of both groups of prisoners believing them all to be prisoners of conscience arrested solely for the expression of their political beliefs.

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To: Medical professionals

From: Medical Office

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Keywords

Theme: POCs/ ill-health/ release

Summary

Kamel Hussain, a prisoner of conscience in his mid-sixties, was released from prison at the end of June 1993 after more than 22 years in prison without charge or trial. Four others arrested around the same time were also released, although a further eight remain in detention. Please see the details given in the attached paper which also contains information on Aktham Nu'aysa, a prisoner of conscience arrested in December 1991, who is now receiving hospital treatment for problems believed to result from torture. He is one of a group of 10 people arrested in connection with the Committees for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below:

- welcoming the release of Kamel Hussain, Marwan Habache, Muhammad Sa'id Talib, Mejalli Nasrawin and Hassan al-Khatib
- urging the release of the remaining eight who were arrested at the same time and who are regarded as prisoners of conscience
- seeking assurances that Aktham Nu'aysa will continue to receive necessary medical care
- urging the release of Aktham Nu'aysa and the nine others tried and imprisoned with him on the grounds that none of the prisoners either used or advocated violence and appear to have been imprisoned solely as a result of their political views

Addresses

His Excellency
President Hafez al-Assad

Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

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

His Excellency Abdullah Talaba
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

His Excellency Dr. Iyad al-Shatti
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

His Excellency Faruq al-Shar'a
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Please write also to the nearest Syrian embassy