

Public

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To: Health professionals
From: Medical office / Middle East Program
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MEDICAL ACTION

Mamun al-Humsi Syria

Keywords prisoner of conscience / illness / medical care

Amnesty International's concerns

Mamun al-Humsi, a 45-year-old member of the Syrian People's Assembly (Parliament), was arrested on 9 August 2001. He was put on trial before the Criminal Court in Damascus on 30 October 2001, charged with offences including "attempting to change the constitution by illegal means".

At a court session on 13 February 2002, lawyers of parliamentarian Mamun al-Humsi, a prisoner of conscience, urged that the hearing be deferred due to the POC's poor health condition and the fact that he is being denied access to specialist medical care as requested by a doctor who saw him at Adra prison where he is being held.

According to a medical report seen by Amnesty International he is suffering from a serious increase in blood sugar level. This condition has been caused by poor control of his diabetes and if not corrected will lead to serious medical complications. Psychological stresses have compounded his poor health. In one court session he was visibly exhausted and witnesses noted swelling of his lower extremities. According to doctors he needs to be hospitalized as an urgent priority to control his diabetes and investigate his kidney function.

Background

Prior to his arrest, Mamun al-Humsi issued a statement calling for political and economic reform in Syria and commenced a hunger strike. Amnesty International requested permission to send observers to his trial but did not receive an answer.

On 26 December 2001, Mamun al-Humsi's lawyers reportedly reaffirmed a request for 20 defence witnesses to be called to testify, including the former Minister of the Interior, Muhammad Harba. The judge rejected the request on the grounds that the testimony would be "unnecessary and counter-productive". Mamun al-Humsi reportedly shouted angrily and defied the judge's order to keep silent. His nephews Riad Sairafi and Ahmad Sairafi, and his brother-in-law Jamal al-Masri, applauded, and continued shouting in al-Humsi's support after they had left the court building. They were arrested in the street by members of the military intelligence, accused of provoking "public disorder" and held in 'Adra Prison on charges of "disorderly behaviour". The three men were released on bail on 19 January 2002. Other relatives of Mamun al-Humsi are also reportedly being harassed and intimidated by the Syrian authorities.

Recommended actions

Please send polite letters, in Arabic, English, French or your own language, to the addresses below, using professionally-headed paper if you use this in your profession:

- urging the authorities to release Mamun al-Humsi immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience;
- expressing concern about reports of his health situation urging that he receive whatever medical care he needs; seek details of any diagnosis and the treatment he is currently receiving;
- asking for assurances that he is being otherwise well-treated in custody and not tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

Addresses

His Excellency
President Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Abu Rummaneh
Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency
Nabil al-Khatib
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: + 963 11 224 6250
e-mail: moj@net.sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency
Maj-Gen Ali Hammud
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Faxes: + 963 11 222 3428
Salutation: Your Excellency

Copies

Please send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of Syria accredited to your country.

Monitoring of action

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter-writing actions. If you write one, two, three or more letters, please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters you write e.g. MDE 24/006/2002 - 2 (if you write two letters). Please send your message to

medical@amnesty.org Thank you.