

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/042/2003

11 November 2003

UA 324/03 Incommunicado detention/fear of torture and ill-treatment

SYRIA Hasan Mustafa (m), aged 32, silversmith

Killed: Khalil Mustafa (m), aged 34, his brother

Hasan Mustafa, a Syrian Kurd, is reportedly being held incommunicado at an unknown location by the Syrian authorities. He is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. His arrest came two months after his brother, Khalil Mustafa, was reportedly tortured to death in detention.

On 18 October, officers of Political Security (*'el'Amn el'Siyassi'*) reportedly came to the small town of 'Ayn al-'Arab, northern Syria, to question relatives of Khalil Mustafa after *al-Jazeera* and other media stations broadcast information on his death in detention. Khalil Mustafa is believed to have died under torture in incommunicado detention on 10 August.

The officers reportedly took Hasan Mustafa to an unknown location. Neither Hasan nor Khalil Mustafa is known to have had any political affiliation. However, scores of Syrian Kurds have been arrested and detained over the years for the peaceful expression of grievances suffered by the Kurdish community in Syria.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Khalil Mustafa was reportedly arrested on 6 August 2003, in connection with an alleged debt he owed. He was allegedly tortured while being held at the Military Intelligence Detention Centre in the city of Aleppo. On 14 August, his corpse was handed over to his family and buried in a cemetery in Aleppo. According to reports, severe injuries and bruises were visible on his corpse, including a leg broken in two places, a missing eye, and a head wound.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English or French or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Hasan Mustafa, detained incommunicado since 18 October;
- seeking assurances that he is being treated humanely in detention, and not subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that he be given immediate and unrestricted access to relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment he may need;
- calling for an end to the apparent persecution of the family of Khalil Mustafa, who is believed to have died under torture on 10 August 2003;
- urging the authorities to carry out an immediate and independent investigation into the death in detention of Khalil Mustafa, with the results made public and those found to be responsible brought to justice;
- calling for the immediate release of Hasan Mustafa unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency, President Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus

Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria

Fax: + 963 11 332 3410

Telexes: 419160 prespl sy

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency, Major-General 'Ali Hammud

Minister of Interior

Ministry of Interior

Merjeh Circle

Damascus

Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria

Fax: + 963 11 222 3428

Telexes: 411016 AFIRS SY

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Syria accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 December 2003.