

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/104/2005

28 November 2005

**Further Information on UA 246/05 (MDE 24/087/2005, 21 September 2005) and follow-up (MDE 24/091/2005, 11 October 2005; MDE 24/094/2005, 1 November 2005) - Incommunicado detention/torture and ill-treatment**

**SYRIA**                      **Mustafa Omar Abdi Malik (m), aged 19, medical student, Somali national**  
**Seraj Khalbous (m), aged 19**  
**Muhammad Ismai'l al-Daj (m), aged 19**  
**Muhammad Anis al-Turk (m), aged 18**

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Seraj Khalbous was released in October. He had been hospitalised for emergency treatment, because of the torture he had been subjected to at the Political Security Branch in al-Fayha in the capital, Damascus. He was allowed to return home, and is reported to be seriously ill.

Muhammad Ismai'l al-Daj and Muhammad Anis al-Turk are apparently still detained incommunicado without charge in al-Fayha. They remain in serious danger of torture and ill-treatment.

They have been held since 12 September, apparently because of allegations that they are involved with "Islamist" groups.

Mustafa Omar Abdi Malik, held since 6 September, is still in custody. However, his family have asked us to take no further campaigning action on his behalf for the time being.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Torture is widespread in Syrian detention and investigation centres, particularly during pre-trial detention, and during periods of incommunicado detention. Over the years, Amnesty International has documented 38 types of torture and ill-treatment used against detainees in Syria. "Confessions" extracted under duress are systematically used as "evidence" in Syrian courts, and the defendants' claims that they have been tortured are almost never investigated. In 2004 at least nine people are reported to have died as a result of torture and ill-treatment suffered while in custody.

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

- expressing grave concern at reports that Muhammad Ismai'l al-Daj and Muhammad Anis al-Turk are held incommunicado, putting them at grave risk of torture, and pointing out that that Seraj Khalbous is still gravely ill as a result of torture suffered while held incommunicado;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Muhammad Ismai'l al-Daj and Muhammad Anis al-Turk are not tortured;
- calling on the authorities to release both men immediately unless they are to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial;
- urging the authorities to investigate the alleged torture of Seraj Khalbous, and to bring those responsible to justice, in line with the UN Convention against Torture, to which Syria acceded in 2004;
- reminding the authorities that the UN's Special Rapporteur on Torture has stated that torture is "most frequently practised during incommunicado detention, [which] should be made illegal, and persons held incommunicado should be released without delay".

#### **APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency President Bashar al-Assad  
President of the Republic

Presidential Palace  
Abu Rummaneh, Al-Rashid Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Fax: + 963 11 332 3410**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Acting Minister of Interior  
Ministry of Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Fax + 963 11 222 3428**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Muhammad al-Ghafari  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Al-Nasr Street  
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Syrian Arab Republic  
**Fax: + 963 11 666 2460**  
**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 9 January 2006.