
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 89/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - SYRIA

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Trade Unionists - 29 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 62

Saudi Arabia - 10 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 62

Burundi - 17 May - SEE NEWS SERVICES 81/94, 53/94 and 36/94

China - 1 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

Pakistan - 29 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

****China - 5 May**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

News service item enclosed is embargoed for 5 May to go with document: "China: Death Penalty Figures recorded for 1993", AI Index: ASA 17/15/94.

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 7 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

AI INDEX: MDE 24/WU 02/94
28 APRIL 1994

SYRIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED ABOUT FATE OF 11 DETAINEES

Amnesty International has today written to the Syrian Minister of the Interior, Dr Muhammad Harba, expressing its grave concern about the fate of 11 men who, the human rights organization has recently been informed, have been held in incommunicado detention without charge or trial, since August 1993.

"For the last nine months the authorities have been completely silent about the fate of these men. No one knows their whereabouts and we are gravely concerned that they may be subjected to torture and ill-treatment", said Amnesty International today.

The 11 men are reported to have been arrested between 23 and 29 August 1993, shortly after attending the funeral procession of Salah Jadid, a former prisoner of conscience who died in custody on 19 August 1993 after almost 23 years in detention without charge or trial.

Among the 11 are Fadi and Usama Munir Jadid, nephews of the late Salah Jadid. They were taken from their home on 23 August 1993, in just their bed clothes and bare feet, by members of the security forces.

Nidal Mahmud Jadid, Salah Mahmud Jadid, Ghassan Fuad Jadid, Sadiq Riad Jadid, Yassir Riad Jadid, 'Ammar 'Abbud and 'Ali al-Hakim, also nephews of Salah Jadid, were arrested on 27, 28 and 29 August. 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Hallaq and Na'im Khuri, both close friends of the Jadid family, were also arrested on 29 August.

The human rights organization is asking the Syrian authorities for information about the whereabouts of the 11 detainees and requests that they be given prompt access to lawyers and their families and also medical attention, if necessary.

Amnesty International is concerned that the detainees may be held purely because of their association with the late Salah Jadid.

"If that is the case then these men are prisoners of conscience and as such they should be released immediately and unconditionally", said Amnesty International.

Lengthy incommunicado detention of political suspects is a regular practice in Syria where it has been a contributory factor in facilitating the torture and death under torture of detainees. Such a practice is contrary to international human rights standards and Syria's own laws. The Syrian Code of Criminal Procedures ostensibly guarantees detained suspects the right to contact a lawyer at any time and in private.

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