

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 19/12/97

Distrib: PG/SC

To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / Middle East sub-regional team
Date: 25 June 1997

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi
LIBYA**

Keywords

Theme: prolonged detention without trial

Profession/association: dentist

Summary

Amnesty International continues to be concerned at the prolonged detention without trial of Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi, a dentist who trained in the USA and holds Masters degrees in dentistry and public health. He has been imprisoned since his arrest in 1984. He has never been charged or tried with any offense though it is believed he was arrested in connection with membership of an illegal organization. AI is urging the Libyan authorities to release Dr al-Turbi unless it can guarantee him a fair trial on charges which should be made public.

Recommended action

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below

- saying that you are writing about Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi who you believe is imprisoned in Abu Salim Prison in Tripoli
- expressing concern that Dr al-Turbi has now been held for more than 13 years without charge or trial
- seeking information on his current state of health
- urging that, unless he is to be charged and tried with a recognisable offence, he be released

Addresses:

Colonel Mu'ammarr al-Gaddafi
Leader of the Revolution
Office of the Leader of the Revolution
Tripoli
Great Socialist People's
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

His Excellency
'Umar Mustafa al-Muntasir
Secretary of the People's Committee
of the People's Bureau for Foreign
Liaison and International Cooperation
Secretariat of the People's Committee
of the People's Bureau for Foreign

Liaison and International Cooperation
Tripoli, Great Socialist People's
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

His Excellency
Muhammad Mahmoud al-Hijazi
Secretary of the People's Committee
for General Security
Secretariat of the People's Committee
for General Security
Tripoli
Great Socialist People's
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

His Excellency
Muhammad Bilqasim al-Zawi
Secretary of the People's Committee
for Justice
Secretariat of the People's Committee
for Justice
Tripoli
Great Socialist People's
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Copies

Please send copies of your letters to the nearest diplomatic representative of Libya.

Other action

You could send a copy of the action to your dental association asking them to appeal to the Libyan leader about Dr al-Turbi's case. You should urge the association to write in polite and measured tones.

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Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi
LIBYA

Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi, born in Derna, Libya, in 1950, was arrested on 28 May 1984 and is believed to have been held since without charge or trial in Abu Salim Prison in Tripoli. Some three weeks prior to his arrest there had been clashes between security forces and the opposition group *al-Jabha al-Watanya Li-Inqad Libya* (National Front for the Salvation of Libya). Hundreds of suspected members were arrested at the time and some were executed. It is believed that the arrest of Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi was linked to his alleged membership of the National Front. AI believes that he was not involved in the incident which precipitated the mass arrests but has continued to seek clarification of the reasons for his detention.

Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi is married with a son and a daughter. He studied at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania in the US from 1981 to 1983 where he obtained Masters degrees in dentistry and public health. Prior to his arrest he worked as director of Benghazi Central Dental Clinic in Libya.

Background

Dr 'Omran 'Omar al-Turbi was one of a number of health professionals on whose behalf AI appealed in 1992 (see *Imprisonment without fair trial: Medical students and health professionals in prison - Libya*, AI Index: MDE 19/02/92, 27 October 1992). Since that time there has been little if any improvement in the situation of prisoners. In July 1996, there was a one week mutiny by prisoners and detainees in Abu Salim Prison. The mutiny was said to have been caused by the appalling conditions in the prison, including lack of medical care, inadequate hygiene, overcrowding and poor diet. Scores of men died during the incident which ended when security forces stormed the prison.

AI remains concerned by the cases of hundreds of political prisoners, including possible prisoners of conscience who continue to be held without charge or trial. AI is urging the Libyan authorities to release all prisoners of conscience and to provide for the fair trial or release of all other political prisoners. All those in custody should be held in conditions which meet international minimum standards and their security should be guaranteed.