

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/008/2003

22 January 2003

**Further Information on UA 366/02 (MDE 24/053/2002, 18 December 2002) Prisoners of conscience/ Fear of torture and ill-treatment/ new concern: Unfair trial**

**SYRIA**                      **Hassan Saleh (m), aged 60** ] **Leading members of the**  
                                 **Marwan 'Uthman (m)**        ] **Syrian Kurdish Yekiti Party**

---

Prisoners of conscience Hassan Saleh and Marwan 'Uthman appeared before a military court in the capital Damascus on 18 January 2003. They were charged with "membership of an unauthorized organisation".

Amnesty International is concerned that trials before the military court fall short of international standards for fair trial as laid out in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which states: "*All persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals. In the determination of any criminal charge against him, or of his rights and obligations in a suit at law, everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law...*"

In 2001, following Syria's periodic report on the implementation of the ICCPR, the UN Human Rights Commission expressed concerns "... *that the procedures of military courts do not respect the guarantees laid down in article 14 of the Covenant.*"

Hassan Saleh and Marwan 'Uthman's next court session is scheduled for 1 February 2003.

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

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoners of conscience Hassan Saleh and Marwan 'Uthman;
- seeking assurances that they are being well treated and not subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that they be allowed immediate and unrestricted access to their family, lawyer or any medical care that they may need;
- urging the Syrian authorities to respect the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in accordance with international human rights standards such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (see Articles 18, 19, 21, 22) to which Syria is a state-party;
- expressing concern at their appearance before a military court in light of the reservations expressed by the UN Human Rights Committee;
- calling for the procedures of the military court to conform with the requirements of ICCPR.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency President Bashar al-Assad  
President of the Republic  
Presidential Palace  
Abu Rummaneh, Al-Rashid Street  
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 the 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 5 March 2003.