

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 45/92 (MDE 24/04/92, 11 February 1992) and follow-up MDE 24/05/92, 24 February 1992 - Incommunicado Detention/Fear of Torture

SYRIA: 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khayyir
Bahjat Sha'bu
'Abdallah Fadil
Muhammad Ghanim
Mahmud Khadhur
Nadim Mazlum
Munzir Jum'a

and six new names: Mahmud al-Khatib
Amjad Kallas - businessman
Jamal Salih Sa'id
'Abd al- Karim Darwish - engineer
Jaffan Humsi
Salama George Kila - writer and journalist

Amnesty International has received the names of six more people reported to be currently detained incommunicado in connection with the prohibited Hizb al-'Amal al-Shuyu'i, Party for Communist Action (PCA). They were reportedly arrested in February and March 1992 in various towns and cities by members of al-Mukhabarat al-'Askariyya, Military Intelligence. Mahmud al-Khatib is reported to have been arrested on 1 February and to be detained for membership of the PCA. The other five are Amjad Kallas, a 38-year-old businessman, Jamal Salih Sa'id, a former prisoner of conscience aged 33, 'Abd al-Karim Darwish, a Palestinian engineer aged 33, Jaffan Humsi, a former prisoner of conscience aged 33, and Salama George Kila, a Palestinian writer and journalist aged 37.

The six were all arrested in February and March 1992 apparently in order to obtain information from them about the PCA. Some had been active in the PCA in the past and as a result had been detained for years without charge or trial. They are said to have had no links with the PCA since their release. Most of them were released in 1991. One, Salama George Kila, had apparently never been a member of the PCA, although he is said to be reputed to have friends and contacts who are active members of the party.

All 13 detainees are believed to be held in Fara' al-Tahqiq al-'Askari, Military Interrogation Branch, and Fara' Falastin, Palestine Branch, detention centres, both in Damascus.

Amnesty International fears that all 13 detainees are at risk of being tortured. In addition, the organization is concerned that they may be held solely for the non-violent expression of their political beliefs and as such would be prisoners of conscience. If this is so, they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that the 13 detainees named above are being held incommunicado following their arrest in recent months and that they may be tortured;
- seeking assurances that they are being treated humanely and are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;

- requesting that all detainees be given prompt access to their families and lawyers, and all necessary medical care;
- asking for their immediate release unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

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APPEALS TO:

1. His Excellency
President Hafez al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 419160 munjed sy
[Salutation: Your Excellency]

2. His Excellency Muhammad Harba
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria
[Salutation: Your Excellency]

3. His Excellency Khaled al-Ansari
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria
[Salutation: Your Excellency]

4. His Excellency Faruq al-Shar'a
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegram: Foreign Affairs Minister, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 411922
[Salutation: Your Excellency]

5. His Excellency Dr. Iyad al-Shatti
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
al-Majlis al-Niyabi Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Health Minister, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: health 412655 sy
[Salutation: Your Excellency]

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Dr. M. Cherif Bakle

Ordre des Mediciens Syriens
Place de l'Etoile
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

and to diplomatic representatives of Syria in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 June 1992.