

19 April 2002

Further information on UA 226/01 (MDE 24/029/2001, 07/09/2001) and follow-ups (MDE 24/030/2001, 11/09/2001), (MDE 24/033/2001, 20/09/2001) and (MDE 24/010/2002, 04/04/2002) - Prisoner of conscience/ Unfair Trial New Concern: Ill-Health

SYRIA 'Aref Dalilah (m), Economist, in his early 60s
Riad Seif (m), Parliamentarian, 54
Hassan Sa'dun (m), Retired teacher
Walid al-Bunni (m), Physician, 38
Kamal al-Labwani (m), Physician, 44
Habib Saleh (m), Businessperson, 52
Habib 'Isa (m), Lawyer, 55
Fawaz Tello (m), Engineer

Amnesty International is concerned for the health of prisoner of conscience 'Aref Dalilah. He was taken from his cell in Sednaya Prison about two weeks ago to a hospital in the capital Damascus. He was suffering from deep vein thrombosis (DVT). He is in urgent need of appropriate medication and specialist medical care, as he was returned to prison before receiving either.

'Aref Dalilah's health could deteriorate further as a result of complications arising from DVT (a blood clot within a deep vein, commonly in the thigh or calf, which can either partially or completely impede blood flow in the vein. It has potentially serious consequences such as a fatal pulmonary embolism or blood clot in the lung).

'Aref Dalilah, a former dean of the faculty of economics of Aleppo University was arrested in Damascus in September 2001 along with four other prisoners of conscience and initially held incommunicado. He was an active member of the preparatory committee of the Civil Society Forum, which campaigns for human rights, political participation and freedom of expression in Syria. He has been charged by the Supreme State Security Court, with among other things, attempting to change the Constitution by illegal means. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

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

- expressing concern at the deteriorating health of 'Aref Dalilah and the failure of the authorities to attend to his medical needs;
- urging the authorities to urgently provide 'Aref Dalilah with any medical care he may need at a specialist medical centre;
- calling for the immediate release of 'Aref Dalilah, 'Riad Seif, Hassan Sa'dun, 'Walid al-Bunni, Kamal al-Labwani, Habib Saleh, Habib 'Isa, and Fawaz Tello as prisoners of conscience;
- urging that the men are allowed immediate access to their lawyers and any medical assistance they may require.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
President Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 419160 prespl sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency
Nabil al-Khatib
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria
e-mail: moj@net.sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency
Maj-Gen Ali Hammud
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria
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 30 May 2002.