

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: MDE 24/011/2004**

**UA 50/04**

**Torture and ill-treatment/Medical concern**

**10 February 2004**

**SYRIA**

**Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu (f), aged 50**

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Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu has reportedly been held incommunicado since 14 January, when she was arrested by military security officers. She is at risk of torture and ill-treatment, and there are concerns for her health, as she has a heart condition and requires medication and a special diet.

She was arrested as she re-entered Syria after 24 years in exile in Jordan. Two of her nine children were with her but were not detained. She was reportedly interrogated in several different places, and is now believed to be held at the Military Intelligence centre at al-Mezze, in the capital, Damascus. Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu has various illnesses including a heart condition which requires special medication and a specific diet.

Her husband, Khaled al-Ra'ei, and three sons are members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood organisation, which renounced armed struggle in 1986. The Muslim Brotherhood and those affiliated to them are subject to the death penalty under Syrian Law 49.

She had fled Syria with her husband, but had reportedly been granted a passport and permission to return to Syria by the Syrian embassy in Amman, Jordan.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Most political parties in Syria, including the Muslim Brotherhood, have been banned since 1958. The organisation continued to function underground, but members were subject to arrest and imprisonment. From the late 1970s the Muslim Brotherhood was involved in armed clashes with government forces, and in July 1980 Law 49 was passed which imposed the death penalty on its members. Many supporters and sympathisers, and their families, fled the country. In 1986 the then leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Dr Hasan Huweydi, officially renounced violence. In recent years, and particularly after the Jordanian government became less hospitable towards sympathisers of the Muslim Brotherhood in the country, many have returned to Syria. Dozens of others have been forcibly returned, from several countries, after their applications for asylum were rejected. Many members and supporters of the organisation, and their relatives, have been arrested on their return to Syria, whether voluntary or forced, even after receiving consent from the Syrian authorities. Many of these detainees have reportedly been tortured and ill-treated, several have "disappeared", and at least one died in custody in March 2002 while held incommunicado.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu, who was arrested on 14 January when she returned from exile in Jordan and is now detained incommunicado, reportedly at al-Mezze in Damascus;
- calling for her to be released immediately unless she is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- urging that she be treated humanely and not tortured or ill-treated in detention;
- calling on the authorities to allow her immediate and unrestricted access to her family and lawyers, and to any specialist medical treatment she may require.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency President Bashar al-Assad  
President of the Republic

Presidential Palace  
Abu Rummaneh, Al-Rashid Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegram: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria**  
**Fax: + 963 11 332 3410**  
**Telex: 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  
**Telegram: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Fax: + 963 11 222 3428**  
**Telex: 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 23 March 2004.