

EXTERNAL

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UA 218/98

Fear of torture/Legal concern

10 August 1998

SYRIAMusa 'Alika, aged 39

Musa 'Alika was reportedly arrested by the Syrian military intelligence on 11 July 1998 on his arrival at Aleppo airport from Germany. He was detained in the Palestine Branch of the military intelligence in Damascus. Amnesty International is concerned that Musa 'Alika may be tortured and ill treated by members of the Syrian military intelligence.

Musa 'Alika belongs to the Kurdish ethnic group in Syria and lived in Germany as a political refugee for several years. He travelled to Syria, reportedly after having being assured by the Syrian authorities that he would not be harmed if he returned there.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners are currently serving long-term prison sentences of up to 22 years in Syria, in connection with their involvement and membership of various unauthorised political parties. Torture and ill-treatment of such prisoners is routine, particularly during the interrogation stage of detention. At present, dozens of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners are held beyond the expiry of sentences handed down by the Supreme State Security Court after grossly unfair trials in connection with their involvement in political parties opposed to the government of Hafez al-Assad.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic, French or your own language:

- calling for the immediate release of Musa 'Alika unless he is charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- urging the Syrian authorities to allow Musa 'Alika access to his family and lawyers;
- seeking assurances that Musa 'Alka is not being tortured or ill-treated

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
President Hafez al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 419160 prespl sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

His Excellency
Dr Muhammad Harba
Minster of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Faxes: + 963 11 222 3428

His Excellency
Nasser Qaddur
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telex: 411 922
Fax: + 963 11 2245747

and 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 21 September 1998.

"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment."