

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/013/2005

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Further Information on UA 155/04(MDE 24/038/2004, 26 April 2004) and follow-ups (MDE 24/040/2004, 17 May 2004; MDE 24/059/2004, 1 September 2004; MDE 24/065/2004, 5 October 2004; and MDE 24/010/2005, 11 March 2005) Prisoners of conscience/fear of torture/unfair trial

SYRIA

**Muhannad al-Dabas (m)] university students
Muhammad 'Arab (m)]**

On 31 March, prisoners of conscience Muhannad al-Dabas and Muhammad 'Arab were released from Adra Prison, just outside the capital Damascus. It has been reported that their release followed President Bashar al-Asad's refusal to ratify their sentences.

The two men had served less than four weeks of a three-year prison sentence handed down by the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) after a grossly unfair trial. They were arrested on 24 April 2004 after a sit-down protest organized by students at the University of Damascus against a new government policy ending guaranteed employment of engineering graduates by the state. They were convicted of "opposing the objectives of the revolution".

No further action is required. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.