

EXTERNAL

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Medical Concern/Prisoner of Conscience

9 September 1997

SYRIA Aktham Nu 'aysa, 46, lawyer

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The health of prisoner of conscience Aktham Nu 'aysa is in steady decline and he is in urgent need of specialist care. He is said to be suffering from high blood pressure and angina, blood in his urine, kidney stones, and deteriorating vision.

Aktham Nu 'aysa was reportedly examined by the prison medical commission on 7 and 18 March 1997. The commission described his medical condition as grave and sent a report to the security service recommending that he be referred to a specialist medical centre. Amnesty International has not received any information indicating that this has been done.

Aktham Nu 'aysa was severely tortured after his arrest on 17 December 1991. He was sentenced to nine years imprisonment on 17 March 1992, after an unfair trial by the Supreme State Security Court for his connection with the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights (CDF) in Syria.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Aktham Nu 'aysa, the spokesperson of the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights (CDF) in Syria, is currently serving a nine-year term of imprisonment at Sadnaya Prison. He was sentenced along with five other members of the CDF by the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) on 17 March 1992 to prison terms ranging from five to ten years. They were convicted on charges of disseminating false information and receiving money from abroad. The convictions, brought after an unfair trial, are related to a CDF leaflet which criticised the Syrian presidential election, without advocating violence, and to a sum of £700 reportedly sent to a CDF member by a relative resident in Europe for his private use.

Hundreds of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners belonging to different political persuasions are imprisoned in Syria, some of them for more than 10 years. Many of them have been imprisoned after unfair trials conducted by the SSSC. Amnesty International has the names of a number of prisoners of conscience and political detainees who are held beyond the expiry of their terms of sentences handed down after unfair trials. In 1996, at least 20 prisoners of conscience and political prisoners held in Syrian prisons were critically ill either due to grave health problems, or injuries reportedly resulting from torture sustained during interrogation.

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

- expressing concern about the medical condition of Aktham Nu 'aysa and calling for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience;
- calling for the immediate referral of Aktham Nu 'aysa to an independent medical examination team;
- demanding that Aktham Nu 'aysa be allowed unlimited access to his family and doctor.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency  
President Hafez al-Assad

Presidential Palace  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: President, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 419160 prespl sy**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Dr Muhammad Harba  
Minister of Interior  
Ministry of Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Hussein Hassun  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Al Nasr Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

His Excellency Nasser Qaddur  
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Al-Rashid Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Fax: + 963 11 224 5747**

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 October 1997.