

PUBLIC

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UA 186/02

Possible Prisoner of Conscience/

20 June 2002

Fear of t

**SYRIAMusallam Shaykh Hasan (m), aged 35**

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Musallam Shaykh Hasan, a leading member of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Unity Party was arrested on 7 May, by members of the political security forces. He is reportedly being held in incommunicado detention and is at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

He was detained in the town of 'Ayn al-'Arab, close to Aleppo in Northern Syria, on charges of distributing Kurdish political literature. He was taken to the Aleppo Political Security Department and later transferred to a detention centre in the capital, Damascus.

Amnesty International considers Musallam Shaykh Hasan to be a possible prisoner of conscience detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression and association.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Torture and ill-treatment is routinely inflicted on Syrian Kurdish political prisoners, while they are held incommunicado in Syrian prisons and detention centres. Muhammad Shukri 'Allush, a Syrian Kurd aged 18, died in the custody of the Syrian police in May 2001, reportedly as a result of torture.

The Syrian authorities impose heavy restrictions on the production and circulation of Kurdish literature, including books and music. In the past, the Syrian authorities have arrested and detained Syrian Kurds without charge for their involvement in the organization of Kurdish cultural activities, including the Kurdish Nawruz (New Year) celebrations.

On 20 March, another member of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Unity Party, Hussain Daoud was sentenced to two years in prison following an unfair trial before the Supreme State Security Court. (See UA 107/01; MDE 24/005/2001; 26 April 2001)

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

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Musallam Shaykh Hasan as a possible prisoner of conscience;
- seeking assurances that he is being well treated and not subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that he be allowed immediate and unrestricted access to his family, lawyer or any medical care that he may need.

**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

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Minister of Justice  
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 1 August 2002.