

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 383/92 Torture/possible prisoners of conscience

4 December 1992

SYRIA More than 200 Syrian Kurds arrested including:

'Ala'uddin Hamam Ahmad, 35, arrested 10 October
Ibrahim Wiso Buzan, 31, arrested 10 October
Muhammad 'Ali Ousman 'Ali, 24, arrested 10 October
Khalil Mustafa Musta, 18, arrested 10 October
'Umar Haj 'Ali 'Amno, 32, arrested 15 October
Musa Hassan Hyssain, 33, arrested 15 October
Sharif Ahmad Shukri, 31, arrested 15 October
Muhammad Saleh Hamo, 30, arrested 17 October
Muhammad Hanifa 'Abrash, 26, arrested 17 October
Muhammad 'Ali Muhammad, 29, arrested 18 October
Muhammad 'Ali Basus, 30, arrested 18 October

Mahmoud 'Amno, released

Amnesty International is gravely concerned about reports that over 200 Syrian Kurds were arrested in October 1992, many of whom may be possible prisoners of conscience. Some of them, including Mahmoud 'Amno, member of the joint leadership of Kurdish political groups in Syria, were released after a few days and are reported to have been treated in a hospital in al-Qamishli for injuries resulting from torture during interrogation.

All were reported to have been arrested by members of the security forces, namely al-Amn al-Siyassi (Political Security), Amn al-Dawla (State Security) and al-Amn al-'Askari (Military Security). Amnesty International has received the names of 11 people arrested between 10 and 18 October, listed above who, in addition to others, are believed to remain in detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the beginning of October 1992, Syrian security forces have carried out widespread arrests of Kurds, especially in the areas of al-Hassakeh, Ra's al-'Ain, al-Qamishli, Aleppo, 'Afrin and Kubbaniya. More than 200 people are reported to have been taken in for interrogation so far, and others are being sought by the authorities.

The arrests apparently began after a leaflet was issued on 5 October by the joint leadership of three Kurdish political groups in Syria: The Kurdish Popular Union, United Democratic Kurdish Party, and Kurdish Democratic Workers. The leaflet stated that it was being issued to mark the 30th anniversary of the introduction of a law which stripped tens of thousands of Kurds of their Syrian nationality and has since deprived them of all basic civil rights despite many of them having served in the Syrian armed forces. The leaflet was in the form of a public appeal for support

for Syrian Kurds to regain their fundamental civil rights.

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

- expressing grave concern about reports that Mahmoud 'Ammo and others have been tortured; requesting that these allegations be immediately investigated, that the findings be made public and, if the reports are confirmed, those found responsible for the torture be brought to justice;

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- seeking information about the names and personal details of all others arrested in the same connection since early October 1992, the reasons for their arrest, and places of detention of all those who continue to be held;

- requesting that all detainees be given prompt access to their families and lawyers, and that all necessary medical care be provided;

- seeking assurances that they are being treated humanely and are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;

- asking for the immediate and unconditional release of all those who are being held solely for the non-violent expression of their political beliefs and all others who are not to be charged with an internationally recognisable criminal offence.

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency
President Hafez al-Assad
Presidential Palace
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria
Telexes: 419160 munjed sy

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) His Excellency Muhammad Harba
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria

Salutation: Your Excellency

3) His Excellency 'Abdallah Tulba
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 15 January 1993.