

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/057/2004

20 August 2004

Further Information on UA 142/04 (MDE 24/031/2004, 14 April 2004) and follow up (MDE 24/036/2004, 23 April 2004) - Incommunicado detention/fear of torture/"disappearance"/medical concern/prisoner of conscience/Unfair trial

SYRIA Aktham Nu'aysa, aged 53, lawyer and human rights defender

Aktham Nu'aysa was released on bail on 16 August. His trial before the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) is due to continue on 24 October. Amnesty International considers the court's procedures to be grossly unfair: Aktham Nu'aysa is facing a sentence of up to 15 years' imprisonment on charges that appear to arise solely from his legitimate work in defence of human rights.

One of his lawyers said that the release, on bail of 2,000 Syrian pounds (approx US\$200), was a "positive surprise". The state news agency, SANA, reported that Aktham Nu'aysa had "pleaded guilty to some of the crimes but denied committing others", and "stressed he was eager to preserve national unity that President Bashar al-Assad was leading."

Aktham Nu'aysa was reported to be in an "acceptable" state of health when he was released.

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

- welcoming the release on bail of Aktham Nu'aysa;
- expressing concern that he is still to be tried before the SSSC, whose procedures Amnesty International considers to be grossly unfair, and urging that all charges against him be dropped as he is being tried solely for his legitimate work in defence of human rights and the peaceful expression of his opinions.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Bashar al-Assad
President
Presidential Palace
Abu Rummaneh
al-Rashid Street
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: + 963 11 332 3410

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Major General 'Ali Hammud
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: + 963 11 222 3428

Telex: 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 2 October 2004.