

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 24/074/2005

18 August 2005

Further Information on UA 140/05 (MDE 24/033/2005, 25 May 2005) and follow-up (MDE 24/037/2005, 3 June 2005; MDE 24/043/2005, 30 June 2005; MDE 24/049/2005, 14 July 2005) - Prisoners of conscience/incommunicado detention/fear of torture and ill-treatment/legal concern/ medical concern

**SYRIA Muhammad Ra'dun (m), aged 56, lawyer, head of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights-Syria (AOHR-S)
Nizar Ristnawi (m), founding member of the AOHR-S**

Nizar Ristnawi is now being held in 'Adra prison, just outside the capital Damascus, where he was transferred to from Sednaya prison. He received a visit from his wife at the beginning of August and is reported to be in good health. He is being held in a large room with other detainees, who are also being held for political reasons.

Military Security reportedly refused Nizar Ristnawi's application to appoint a panel of defence lawyers for his forthcoming trial before the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC). Up to now there is no information as to what he is to be charged with or when his case will be heard. Trials before the SSSC fall far short of international standards for trial.

We are pleased to say that Muhammad Ra'dun is being allowed monthly visits from his wife. He has requested that no further action be taken on his case for the time being.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Syrian authorities systematically harass human rights defenders and curtail their activities. (See AI's recent public appeal *Syria: Unable to move: Freedom of movement restricted for Human Rights Defenders (and Others)*, MDE 24/073/2005, 12 August 2005).

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

- welcoming the news that Nizar Ristnawi have been allowed to receive family visits;
- calling for the charges against Nizar Ristnawi to be dropped, and reminding the authorities that any proceedings against him must comply with international standards for fair trial and that he should be given immediate access to a lawyer of his choice;
- calling on the authorities to release Nizar Ristnawi immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
- remind the authorities of the UN Human Rights Committees' recommendations to Syria that it "end all harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders".

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President Bashar al-Assad
President of the Republic
Presidential Palace
Abu Rummaneh, Al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: + 963 11 332 3410
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency General Ghazi Kan'an
Minister of Interior, Ministry of Interior
Merjeh Circle
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax + 963 11 222 3428
Email: admin@civilaffair-moi.gov.sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Muhammad al-Ghafari
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: + 963 11 222 3428
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 29 September 2005.