

[Title]

SYRIA: Stop torture of mother of nine

[Extract]

Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu, a mother of nine, is at risk of torture and ill-treatment following her arrest by military security officers. Act now.

[main text]

Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu, who has spent more than four weeks in incommunicado detention in Syria, is believed to be at serious risk of torture or ill-treatment. Concerns for her welfare are heightened because she has various illnesses, including a heart condition which requires special medication and a specific diet.

Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu was arrested by military security officers on 14 January, as she re-entered Syria after 24 years in exile in Jordan. Two of her nine children were with her but were not detained. She was reportedly interrogated in several different places, and is now believed to be held at the Military Intelligence centre at al-Mezze, in the capital, Damascus.

Her husband, Khaled al-Ra'ei, and three sons are members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood organisation, which renounced armed struggle in 1986. The Muslim Brotherhood and those affiliated to them are subject to the death penalty under Syrian Law 49.

Many people who have returned to Syria from exile in recent years have reportedly been tortured or ill-treated by security forces; several have "disappeared"; and at least one person has died in custody while held incommunicado.

[action]

Take Action

Write to the President of Syria, urging that Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu is treated humanely and not tortured or ill-treated in detention, and calling for her to be released immediately unless she is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

[letter]

Your Excellency

I am seriously concerned for the safety of Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu, who was arrested on 14 January when she returned from 24 years of exile in Jordan and is now detained incommunicado, reportedly at al-Mezze in Damascus.

She had reportedly been granted a passport and permission to return to Syria by the Syrian embassy in Amman, Jordan.

Many people who, like her, have returned to Syria from exile in recent years have reportedly been tortured or ill-treated by your security forces; several have "disappeared"; and at least one has died in custody while held incommunicado.

In light of this I call for you to make an immediate and public guarantee that Mu'eyna Muhammad Yusef Sa'adu will be treated humanely and not tortured or ill-treated in detention.

I also urge that she is released immediately unless she is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence, and that she is allowed immediate and unrestricted access to her family and lawyers, and to any specialist medical treatment she may require.

Yours

[address]

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

Why no email address?

Amnesty International believes that the most effective way of putting pressure on the Syrian authorities regarding this case is by sending postal letters or faxes. Please take the extra couple of minutes needed to send appeals in this way.

[BACKGROUND INFORMATION]

Most political parties in Syria, including the Muslim Brotherhood, have been banned since 1958. The organisation continued to function underground, but members were subject to arrest and imprisonment. From the late 1970s the Muslim Brotherhood was involved in armed clashes with government forces, and in July 1980 Law 49 was passed which imposed the death penalty on its members. Many supporters and sympathisers, and their families, fled the country.

In 1986 the then leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Dr Hasan Huweydi, officially renounced violence. In recent years, and particularly after the Jordanian government became less hospitable towards sympathisers of the Muslim Brotherhood in the country, many have returned to Syria. Dozens of others have been forcibly returned, from several countries, after their applications for asylum were rejected. Many members and supporters of the organisation, and their relatives, have been arrested on their return to Syria, whether voluntary or forced, even after receiving consent from the Syrian authorities.

Many of these detainees have reportedly been tortured and ill-treated, several have "disappeared", and at least one died in custody in March 2002 while held incommunicado.