

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED JEHOVAH'S WITNESS AT RISK OF TORTURE

Nader Nseir, a 38 year-old Syrian Jehovah's Witness, has been held in incommunicado detention since 7 May 2010; he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. His place of detention appears to be unknown, raising concerns that he may be a victim of enforced disappearance.

Nader Nseir is a Syrian national, who was living in Lebanon with his wife.

While visiting Syria in 2009, Nader Nseir was summoned to the Political Security branch in Latakia, western Syria. Amnesty International has received reports that he was pressured to become an informer for them about the Jehovah's Witnesses, but refused. He had his ID card confiscated by Political Security and, fearing he would not be allowed to cross the border as a result, returned to Lebanon clandestinely. In Lebanon, he was arrested for illegally entering the country and, on 7 May 2010, he was deported to Syria where he was arrested upon arrival. Since his arrest, his family has attempted to discover his whereabouts, including, it appears, by enquiring at the detention centres of a number of different security forces, but the authorities have reportedly not disclosed where he is or any other information about him.

Jehovah's Witnesses has been banned in Syria since 1964 but generally its members are able to meet and worship in private. Torture and other ill-treatment is widely practised in Syrian detention and interrogation centres and detainees are most at risk while held in incommunicado detention. In 2009, at least seven deaths occurred as a possible result of torture and other ill treatment in custody.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or French or your own language:

- √ Expressing alarm that Nader Nseir may be the victim of an enforced disappearance as he has been detained incommunicado for more than two months, apparently at an unknown location, and the authorities have reportedly refused to disclose his whereabouts, thereby putting him at risk of torture and other ill-treatment;
- √ Urging the authorities to disclose immediately his whereabouts and reason for his arrest and to ensure that he is provided with access to visits from his family, a lawyer and any medical attention he may require;
- √ Urging the authorities to release Nader Nseir immediately unless he is to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 AUGUST 2010 TO:

President

His Excellency Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 332 3410

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Major Sa'id Mohamed Samour
Ministry of Interior
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 222 3428

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Walid al-Mu'allim
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Abu Rummaneh
al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 332 7620 (please keep trying if you don't get through first time)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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