

PUBLIC

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04 November 2003

UA 313/03      Fear of torture and ill-treatment/unlawful detention/incommunicado detention/ill-health  
SYRIA/      'Abdallah al-Malki (m), Canadian/Syrian national  
CANADA

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned at reports that 'Abdallah al-Malki, a Canadian/Syrian national, has been subjected to prolonged torture and ill-treatment in incommunicado detention in Syria. He is at risk of further torture or ill-treatment.

According to reports, 'Abdallah al-Malki was arrested as he arrived at the airport in the Syrian capital Damascus in May 2002 and was held at a secret location until September or October 2003. He is now believed to be held in Sednaya prison on the outskirts of Damascus. 'Abdallah al-Malki has not been granted permission to see representatives from the Canadian Consulate and has allegedly been denied access to his lawyer and relatives.

'Abdallah al-Malki has reportedly been subjected to a form of torture known as the *dullab*, which involves hanging the victim from a suspended tyre and beating him or her with sticks and cables. He has apparently also been given electric shocks and has been beaten around his body with cables as well as kicked in the head. 'Abdallah al-Malki is said to be in poor health and to have lost a lot of weight.

It is thought that 'Abdallah al-Malki is being held in connection with alleged "terrorist" activities but he has not been charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has repeatedly raised concerns about the use of torture of political detainees in Syrian prisons. Maher Arar, also a Canadian/Syrian national, was detained without charge by the Syrian authorities for one year until his release on 5 October 2003, after which he returned to Canada (see UA 314/02, AMR 51/159/2002, 21 October 2002 and follow-ups). He had been deported from the USA via Jordan in October 2002. He was reportedly accused of having links with alleged "terrorist" groups and was held incommunicado at a secret location in Syria, where he was reportedly tortured and ill-treated.

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

##### **To the Syrian authorities:**

- expressing concern at the reports that 'Abdallah al-Malki is being tortured and ill-treated;
- calling for an immediate investigation into the reports that 'Abdallah al-Malki has been tortured and ill-treated, with the results to be made public and anyone found responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that 'Abdallah al-Malki's rights are fully respected, including the right to humane treatment; the right to be informed of the reasons for the detention and to be able to challenge the lawfulness of the detention; the right to the presumption of innocence; the right to prompt access to and assistance of a lawyer; and the right to be able to communicate with, and receive visits from family and friends;
- urging that 'Abdallah al-Malki be given immediate and unrestricted access to Canadian consular officials;
- urging the authorities to provide 'Abdallah al-Malki with any medical treatment he may require;
- calling for the immediate disclosure of the whereabouts of 'Abdallah al-Malki;
- expressing concern that 'Abdallah al-Malki has been held for 1 ½ years without charge or trial and calling for his the immediate release unless he is to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

**To the Canadian authorities**

- drawing their attention to the case of the reported torture and incommunicado detention without charge of Canadian/Syrian national 'Abdallah al-Malki;
- urging that they make representations to the Syrian government to ensure that 'Abdallah al-Malki is treated humanely and not subjected to any further torture or other ill-treatment; that he is given immediate access to Canadian consular officials, lawyers, relatives and adequate medical treatment; and that he be released unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Syrian Authorities:**

His Excellency  
President Bashar al-Assad  
Presidential Palace  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegram:** President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria  
**Telex:** 419160 prespl sy  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

His Excellency  
Maj-Gen 'Ali Hammud  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Merjeh Circle  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegram:** Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria  
**Fax:** + 963 11 222 3428  
**Telex:** 411016 AFIRS SY  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Canadian Authorities:**

The Honorable William Graham  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
K1A 0G2  
**Telegram:** Foreign Affairs Minister, Ontario, Canada  
**Fax:** + 1 613 996 9709  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**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 16 December 2003.