

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/019/2003

10 February 2003

Further Information on UA 314/02 (AMR 51/159/2002, 21 October 2002) and follow-up (AMR 51/161/2002, 25 October 2002) - Fear of torture/ incommunicado detention/ detention without trial

USA/SYRIA/CANADA

Maher Arar (m), Canadian National

Amnesty International is concerned that Maher Arar is being held incommunicado at an undisclosed detention centre in Syria, where he is at risk of being tortured.

Maher Arar has been held in detention in Syria since his forcible deportation from the USA around 21 October 2002. Canadian Consular officials made several visits to Maher Arar in Syria previous to 7 January but he was unable to talk freely as Syrian officials remained present. Maher Arar has reportedly not yet been charged or tried.

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

To the Syrian authorities:

- expressing concern for the safety of Maher Arar who is being held in incommunicado secret detention and without access to Canadian consular officials;
- urging that he be humanely treated and not subjected to torture or ill treatment in detention;
- asking that the whereabouts of Maher Arar be disclosed and that he be allowed immediate and unrestricted access to his family and a lawyer;
- calling for his immediate release unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

To the Canadian authorities:

- urging them to do everything possible to be granted access to Maher Arar and to provide him with any assistance he might need;
- calling on them to press Syrian officials to immediately release Maher Arar unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

To the US authorities:

- expressing concern that Maher Arar was deported reportedly first to Jordan and is now in detention at an unknown location in Syria;
- urging the authorities to use their influence to ensure that Maher Arar is humanely treated and not subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- expressing concern at the circumstances in which the deportation took place and calling on them to ensure that anybody threatened with extradition or expulsion can challenge the decision to detain and expel them in a fair hearing, including individuals detained in airport "transit zones";
- noting the US government's obligations under the Convention against Torture or Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the provisions of other standards of international law;
- urging them to ensure that no other detainees are forcibly removed to a country where they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment or other serious human rights abuses take place.

APPEALS TO:

Syrian Authorities:

His Excellency
President Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria

Telexes: 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

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria

Telexes: 411016 AFIRS SY

Salutation: Your Excellency

Canadian Authorities:

The Honourable Bill Graham

Minister of Foreign Affairs

125 Sussex Drive

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0G2 Canada

Telegrams: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ontario, Canada

Fax: + 1 613 996 3443

Salutation: Dear Minister

US Authorities:

The Honorable John Ashcroft

Attorney General

Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Room 440

Washington DC 20530-001

USA

Telegram: Attorney General, Washington DC, USA

Fax: + 1 202 307 6777

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

INS Commissioner James Ziglar

425 I Street NW

Washington DC 20536, USA

Telegrams: INS Commissioner, Washington USA

Fax: + 1 202 307 9911

Salutation: Dear Commissioner Ziglar

COPIES TO:

The Honorable Colin Powell, Secretary of State

2201 C Street NW

Washington, DC 20520

USA

Telegrams: Secretary of State, Washington DC, USA

Fax: + 1 202 647 2283

Salutation: Dear Secretary of State

and 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 24 March 2003