

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 222/06 (MDE 24/052/2005, 18 August 2006) and follow-up (MDE 24/064/2006, 19 October 2006) – Incommunicado detention/fear of torture or ill-treatment/possible prisoner of conscience

SYRIA 'Ali Sayed al-Shihabi (m), aged 50, English language teacher

'Ali Sayed al-Shihabi was released on 9 January—under a Presidential amnesty. He thanked “everyone for all the work they did on my behalf: lawyers, members of Amnesty International and all other international organizations.”

He had been arrested on 10 August 2006, and apparently held at the State Security centre at Kafr Soussa, in the capital, Damascus. In October he was moved to 'Adra prison, on the outskirts of Damascus.

'Ali Sayed al-Shihabi was reportedly held on charges relating to “knowingly broadcasting abroad false or exaggerated news which damages the reputation of the state or its financial standing” and “joining a political or social organization of an international nature without the permission of the government”.

'Ali Sayed al-Shihabi has written articles on political and social issues, particularly for a website called *Hiwar al-Mutamedn* ('Civilised Dialogue'). He also had two books published in Syria on social affairs. He has been summoned for questioning many times in the past and was held as a prisoner of conscience between 1982 and 1991 for his membership of the outlawed Party for Communist Action. He has since left the party.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.