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URGENT ACTION

Iran/Syria: Further information on Forcible return/Fear of torture and ill-treatmentPUBLIC AI Index: MDE 13/091/2006
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Further Information on UA 132/06 (MDE 24/037/2006, 15 May 2006 and MDE 24/041/2006, 2 June 2006) – Forcible return/Fear of torture and ill-treatment

IRAN/SYRIA Faleh 'Abdullah al-Mansuri (m), aged 60, President of the Ahwazi Liberation Organisation (ALO), Dutch national Rasool Mezrea' (m), ALO member
 Taher 'Ali Mezrea' (m), aged 40
 Jamal 'Obeidawi (previously named as 'Abdawi / Obeidi) (m), aged 34, student and Chair of Ahwazi Student Union in Syria
 Amnesty International has learnt that Iranian Arabs Faleh 'Abdullah al-Mansuri, Rasool (or 'Abdulrasool) Mezrea', Jamal 'Obeidawi (previously named in error as two people: Jamal 'Abdawi and Jamal Obeidi) and Taher 'Ali Mezrea' were reportedly forcibly returned to Iran from Syria on 16 May. It is believed that they are being held incommunicado at an unknown location in Iran, and may be at risk of torture, ill-treatment, and possibly execution.

The four were arrested by Political Security officers in the Syrian capital, Damascus, on 11 May, along with three other men, Musa Suwari, Ahmad 'Abd al-Jaber Abiat, and 'Issa Yassin al-Musawi. They were reportedly held incommunicado at an unknown location. According to reports, Musa Suwari, Ahmad 'Abd al-Jaber Abiat, and 'Issa Yassin al-Musawi were released between 11 May and 19 May.

Most of the men are said to have been recognised as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Faleh 'Abdullah al-Mansuri has since acquired Dutch nationality. His son, Adnan al-Mansuri, was reportedly informed of his father's forcible return to Iran by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 9 August. Returning refugees or any other individual to a country where they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment or other serious human rights abuses is a violation of Syria's obligations under international law, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which it is a state party.

Urgent Action

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See also

[Syria: Further information on forcible return and concern: Torture \(02/06/2006\)](#)



[Syria: Fear of forcible return \(15/05/2006\)](#)

There is no further information on Sa'id 'Awda al-Saki, an Iranian Arab and a recognized refugee, who was arrested at the same time as the men named above, and was reportedly forcibly returned to Iran on 14 May. He is now held incommunicado at an undisclosed location (see UA 150/06, MDE 13/054/2006, 26 May 2006).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of Iran's Arab community lives in the province of Khuzestan which borders Iraq. It is strategically important because it is the site of much of Iran's oil reserves, but the Arab population does not feel it has benefited as much from the oil revenue as the Persian population. Historically, the Arab community has been marginalised and discriminated against. Tension has mounted among the Arab population since April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Hundreds have been arrested and there have been reports of torture. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October, the cycle of violence has intensified, with hundreds of people reportedly arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. Two men, Mehdi Nawaseri and Ali Awdeh Afrawi, were executed in public on 2 March after they were convicted of involvement in the October bombings. Their executions followed unfair trials before a Revolutionary Court during which they are believed to have been denied access to lawyers, and their confessions, along with those of seven other men, were broadcast on television. At least 10 other Iranian Arabs are also reportedly under sentence of death, accused of involvement in the bombings, distributing material against the state, having contact with dissident organizations operating abroad, and endangering state security. Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty as the ultimate violation of the right to life. Please see Iran: Death Sentences appeal case – 11 Iranian Arab men facing death sentences, AI Index MDE 13/051/2006, May 2006 <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE130512006?open&of=ENG-IRN>

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