

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

Your Excellency,

We welcome the recent efforts made by the Syrian government in releasing prisoners of conscience and political prisoners. This encourages us to write to you concerning the case of Dr. Michel Sa'adey. More than twenty years ago, on 13 May 1978, Dr. Michel Sa'adey, a Syrian citizen, was arrested by two plainclothes individuals in a jeep in a Damascus street. No one has seen or heard from him since. At the time of Dr. Sa'adey's disappearance, he had just come back to Syria after studying and practicing medicine in France. He was a volunteer at the Muwassat Hospital in Damascus.

Despite numerous requests, Dr. Sa'adey's family has received absolutely no official information about what happened to him. Amnesty International received reports in 1983 that Dr. Sa'adey was allegedly seen in Tador Prison. Besides not knowing the whereabouts of Dr. Sa'adey, and indeed whether he is alive or dead, the reasons for Dr. Sa'adey's arrest are also a mystery. It is suspected that he was possibly arrested for voicing criticism of the Syrian government.

Please tell us why Dr. Sa'adey was arrested and where he is. If he is a prisoner of conscience - detained solely for the nonviolent expression of his beliefs - he should be released immediately and unconditionally. Syria's constitution and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, to which Syria is a party) ensure the right to freedom of expression for all, and the ICCPR also prohibits arbitrary arrest and ensures the right to a fair trial. If Dr. Sa'adey did get a trial, please let us know the details. We are very concerned about Dr. Sa'adey. We urge you to give his family news of his whereabouts immediately and give Dr. Sa'adey access to his family, legal help, and medical attention if needed.

Please let us know any information you have on Dr. Michel Sa'adey. Thank you for your help.

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