

# URGENT ACTION

## ACTIVIST FACING UNFAIR TRIAL

**Peaceful political activist Gebrail Moushe Kourie is to be tried by the Anti-Terrorism Court, which does not abide by international fair trial standards. He has been in custody since December 2013 and has been held in 'Adra Prison since February. There are concerns that he may have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated.**

**Gebrail Moushe Kourie** is the President of the Assyrian Democratic Organization, a Syrian political party that the Syrian government considers illegal. The party is a member of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, a coalition of Syrian opposition groups. He presented himself for questioning on 19 December 2013, when he was summoned by Syrian State Security in his home town of Qamishli, northern Syria. He presented himself to the State Security branch as requested but did not return home.

According to a local contact, Gebrail Moushe Kourie spent about 60 days in various detention centres run by the Syrian security forces in Qamishli and Damascus, where torture and ill-treatment are rife, and was then transferred to 'Adra prison, where he has been allowed one family visit. He was brought before a Criminal Court judge and accused of "belonging to an unlicensed secret political party" and "incitement of violence to topple the government". The Criminal Court judge referred his case in August to the Anti-Terrorism Court, which does not afford defendants due process rights according to international fair trial standards.

The same contact told Amnesty International that they were aware of reports that Gebrail Moushe Kourie was in poor health.

Amnesty International believes that Gebrail Moushe Kourie has been detained solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and therefore considers him a prisoner of conscience.

**Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to release Gebrail Moushe Kourie immediately and unconditionally because he is a prisoner of conscience;
- Urging them to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to grant Gebrail Moushe Kourie access to any medical attention he may require.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 NOVEMBER 2014 TO:**

Permanent Representative to the UN

Bashar Ja'afari, Ambassador  
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor, New  
York, NY 10017  
Fax: +1 212 983 4439  
E-mail: [exesec.syria@gmail.com](mailto:exesec.syria@gmail.com)  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

President

Bashar al-Assad  
Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)  
(If you can't send a fax, please include  
your message to the president in an  
email to the Ambassador, and ask for it  
to be forwarded)  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Justice

Dr Najm al-Ahmad  
Fax: +963 11 666 2460  
(If you can't send a fax, please include  
your message to the president in an  
email to the Ambassador, and ask for it  
to be forwarded)  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.



# URGENT ACTION

## ACTIVIST FACING UNFAIR TRIAL

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Gebrail Moushe Kourie had previously been called for questioning by the security forces, but when he presented himself he was usually held for only a few hours before being released. As part of his role with the Assyrian Democratic Organization, he frequently attended meetings outside Syria.

The Anti-Terrorism Court was created through Law no. 22 of July 2012 in order to address offences set out in the Anti-Terrorism law, which was adopted by the Syrian authorities in the same month. The Anti-Terrorism law provides for an over-broad definition of what constitutes “terrorism” and has been used in the repression of people perceived to be peaceful activists or opponents of the Syrian government. A Syrian woman, Yara Faris, was brought before the Anti-Terrorism Court after being accused of providing humanitarian assistance to displaced people. For more information, see UA 77/14 ([www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2014/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2014/en)).

For an insight into the widespread torture and other ill-treatment in Syria’s detention centres, see *I wanted to die: Syria’s torture survivors speak out* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>). Thousands are reported to have died in the custody of the Syrian government since unrest began in 2011. Amnesty International documented this practice in the report *Deadly detention: Deaths in custody amid popular protest in Syria* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/035/2011/en>). For further information on detention conditions in some of the branches of Syria’s security forces, please also refer to Amnesty International’s current campaign against enforced disappearances: <https://campaigns.amnesty.org/campaigns/conflict-in-syria>.

Name: Gebrail Moushe Kourie  
Gender m/f: m

UA: 235/14 Index: MDE 24/040/2014 Issue Date: 26 September 2014