



## Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc.

The University of Arizona · 1232 North Cherry Avenue · Tucson, Arizona 85721

2 February 1996

His Excellency Mu'ammarr al-Qaddafi  
Office of the Leader of the Revolution  
Tripoli  
Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
Libya

Your Excellency:

The Committee on Academic Freedom in the Middle East and North Africa of the Middle East Studies Association wishes to express its deep concern about reports of the arrest, torture, and imprisonment of 24 students.

The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2400 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The association publishes the respected *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and is committed to ensuring respect for the principles of academic freedom and human rights throughout the region.

We understand that 24 students were arrested in the wake of demonstrations in Bani Walid, south-east Tripoli, in September of 1995. The students were charged with various offenses, including offending the leader of the revolution and committing acts against the revolution and acts of sabotage. The students were reportedly convicted in summary trials in secret and without access to lawyers in December, and are currently being held incommunicado in al-Jdayda Prison just outside Tripoli. The trials were reportedly preceded by interrogations during which the students were severely tortured, including electric shocks and beatings on the soles of the feet. There is apparently reason to fear that their maltreatment will continue.

Our information indicates that the imprisoned students include Adil Muhammad al-Khazni, Salih Sulayman Haddoud, Faraj Sulayman al-Du'ayki, Sulayman Abu Sitta, Abdullah al-Mahdi Abu Sitta, Salah al-Din Iyad al-Shibani, Muhammad Hassan al-Barrani, Muhammad al-Mahtout al-Si'ani, and 16 others.

We respectfully request that this case be immediately investigated, and we urge that every step be taken in the event that the reports are correct that these students were tortured and summarily tried. Any violation of people's right to fair and public trial with legal counsel and due process protections is a serious breach of international human rights norms. We further request that any of these students who are being held in jail by

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reason of their expression of political opinions be released forthwith; that all of the detainees be afforded access to counsel, to their families, and to medical care; and that their right to humane treatment be respected.

Respectfully,



Anne H. Betteridge  
Executive Director

cc: Umar Mustafa al-Muntasir, Secretary of the People's Committee of the People's  
Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation  
Zanati Mohammad al-Zanati, Secretary of the General People's Congress