**Syrian Lawyer, 79, Sentenced to 3 years in Jail**

By REUTERS

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*http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/05/world/middleeast/05syria.html*

DAMASCUS, Syria (Reuters) — A Syrian military court on Sunday imposed a three-year prison term on a 79-year-old lawyer who had campaigned for decades for an end to emergency law. The sentence raised fears among the lawyer’s defense team that he might not survive the incarceration.

The court convicted the lawyer, Haitham Maleh, who spent six years as a political prisoner in the 1980s and had been barred from leaving Syria, on charges of “weakening national morale.”

“This is tragic,” one of his lawyers said. “Haitham Maleh is an old and ill man.”

The United States criticized the punishments of Mr. Maleh and another lawyer convicted last month on the same charges.

Syria has intensified a campaign of arrests of political opponents over the last two years, even as it has moved with some success to end a prolonged international isolation.