

URGENT ACTION

FEARS FOR JOURNALIST ARRESTED IN SYRIA

Palestinian journalist, Salameh Kaileh, was arrested in Syria by men believed to be Air Force Intelligence officers on 24 April. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment, and there is concern for his health as he requires daily medication.

Salameh Kaileh, aged 57 and a Jordanian national, was last seen on 24 April 2012 when men in civilian clothing raided his flat in Barzah, in the suburbs of Damascus, and arrested him. A lawyer based in Damascus informed Amnesty International that the men who arrested him were known to be from Air Force Intelligence.

On 10 May, Salameh Kaileh phoned his ex-wife to inform her that he was being held at the Department of Immigration and that he was going to be forcibly repatriated to Jordan. He also told her that she may be allowed to visit him. She received another call on 11 May from the security forces, who informed her that she could not visit him yet and that he had been transferred to the Department of Criminal Security in Damascus.

Salameh Kaileh is a Palestinian journalist with Jordanian nationality and a long-term resident of Syria. He was arrested in 1991 and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment in Damascus for his alleged membership of the Communist Labour Party. As far as Amnesty International is aware, Salameh Kaileh has not taken part in the ongoing popular protests and his activities are strictly linked to his journalism. For these reasons, Amnesty International considers Salameh Kaileh a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his rights to legitimate freedom of expression, and that the threat of forcible repatriation is yet another attempt by the authorities to silence his criticism of them.

Following 16 days in incommunicado detention, there is particular concern about Salameh Kaileh's health as he is required to take daily medication since recovering from throat cancer in 2004, and it is not known if he is receiving this.

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

- Calling for Salameh Kaileh to be immediately and unconditionally released as he is a prisoner of conscience held solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association;
- Expressing concern that Salameh Kaileh was held incommunicado for 16 days and that he is at risk of torture, ill-treatment and forcible repatriation to Jordan, as a further punishment for the peaceful exercise of his rights
- Calling on the Syrian authorities not to forcibly repatriate him to Jordan, to lift any threat of such a repatriation and to allow him immediate access to a lawyer and family;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure he has immediate and regular access to all necessary medical care;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 JUNE 2012 TO:

President

Bashar al-Assad
 Presidential Palace, al-Rashid Street
 Damascus,
 Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Major General Mohamad
 Ibrahim al-Shaar, Ministry of Interior,
 'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 11 211 9578 (keep trying)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Walid al-Mu'allim
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 al-Rashid Street
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 11 214 6253 (keep trying)
Salutation: Your Excellence

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Salameh Kaileh was born 1955 in Birzeit in the West Bank. He studied in Iraq before moving to study and work in live in Syria. Some of his books include *Arabs and the National Question* (1989), *Critique of Mainstream Marxism* (1990), *Imperialism and the Plunder of the World* (1992), *Socialism or Barbarism* (2001), *the problems of Marxism in the Arab World* (2003), and *The Problem of the Arab Nationalist Movement* (2005). Since early 2011, Salameh Kaileh has written articles in support of the ongoing pro-reform demonstrations; however, he has also criticised the difference opposition groups for failing to truly represent the people calling for change. An eye-witness present when Salameh Kaileh was arrested told Amnesty International that the men confiscated papers and a laptop from his apartment during the raid.

Largely peaceful pro-reform demonstrations began sporadically in February 2011 but became larger and more frequent after the first killings of demonstrators the following month. Initially largely peaceful, the Syrian authorities responded in the most brutal manner in their efforts to suppress them. In the year since then, although peaceful demonstrations have continued, the unrest has turned increasingly violent, with armed opposition groups, many loosely under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) carrying out attacks mainly against Syrian security forces. Amnesty International has obtained the names of more than 9,000 people reported to have died or been killed during or in connection with the protests and related unrest since mid-March 2011. Members of the security forces have also been killed, some by defecting soldiers who have taken up arms against the government.

Thousands of suspected opponents of the Syrian government have been arrested in the past 12 months and many, if not most, are believed to have been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International has the names of more than 350 people reported to have died in custody in this period and has documented many cases of torture or other ill-treatment. For further information about torture and other ill-treatment of detainees in Syria, see *"I wanted to die": Syria's torture survivors speak out* <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>. Amnesty International has also received many reports of individuals apparently subjected to enforced disappearance, where state officials have failed to provide families with any information concerning the fate of individuals, most of whom are believed to have been arrested by security forces.

Despite the Syrian government's acceptance on 27 March 2012 of the six-point plan drawn up by the Joint Special Envoy for the United Nations and the Arab League on Syria, Kofi Annan, and the ceasefire agreement of 12 April, Amnesty International has continued to receive reports of arrests and continuing detention of people in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance. Amnesty International has previously documented human rights violations and abuses against injured people and health professionals in selected Syrian hospitals. For more information, please see Amnesty International's report *Health crisis: Syrian government targets the wounded and health workers* <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/059/2011/en>.

Since April 2011, Amnesty International has documented systematic and widespread human rights violations which amount to crimes against humanity, and has called for the situation in Syria to be referred to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, as well as an international arms embargo on Syria, and for an assets freeze on President Bashar al-Assad and his close associates.

Go to the interactive Eyes on Syria map (www.eyesonsyria.org) to see where human rights violations are being committed in Syria, and Amnesty International's global activism to seek justice.

Name: Salameh Kaileh

Gender m/f: Male

UA: 134/12 Index: MDE 24/044/2012 Issue Date: 11 May 2012