

URGENT ACTION

BROTHER OF RIGHTS ACTIVIST HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Yassin Ziadeh, brother of exiled Syrian human rights activist Radwan Ziadeh, has been held in incommunicado detention since his arrest on 30 August in Daraya, near the capital Damascus. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment and is likely to be a prisoner of conscience.

Yassin Ziadeh, a 37-year-old businessman, was seen being arrested by three men in plain clothes believed to be agents of Air Force Intelligence (AFI) on 30 August, near the al-Mustafa mosque in Daraya, in the governorate of Rif Damashq which surrounds Damascus. AFI is reported to be the main security agency operating in Daraya, where it has a large interrogation and detention centre. A released detainee told relatives of Yassin Ziadeh that he had seen him in the centre and an official of the ruling Ba'th Party spoke with the family and confirmed his detention. It is not thought that he has been charged with any offence.

According to his family, Yassin Ziadeh has taken no part in the ongoing pro-reform protests and his detention is believed to be motivated by the peaceful human rights work of his brother, Radwan Ziadeh, who is President of the Damascus Centre for Human Rights Studies. Radwan Ziadeh is in exile in the USA, having left Syria in October 2007 and his family have been prevented from travelling outside Syria since February 2008, apparently on account of his human rights activities. Several other individuals in Syria have been detained in recent months on apparent account of the pro-reform activities of their relatives, either as a way of punishing the family or as a "bargaining chip" to obtain the arrest of the wanted activist.

There is grave concern for Yassin Ziadeh's safety, as a number of released detainees who were held during the ongoing unrest in Syria have reported that torture and other ill-treatment are widely used both as means to obtain a "confession" and as a way of punishing those who protest to intimidate others into not joining them.

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

- Expressing concern that Yassin Ziadeh appears to be detained solely for the human rights activities of his exiled brother Radwan Ziadeh, in which case he would be a prisoner of conscience and should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Expressing concern that Yassin Ziadeh is being held in incommunicado detention and therefore at increased risk of torture and calling on the authorities to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and granted immediate access to his family, legal counsel of his own choosing, and any medical attention he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 OCTOBER 2011 TO:

President

Bashar al-Assad
 Presidential Palace
 al-Rashid Street
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 11 332 3410
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 6251/2/3
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defence

His Excellency General Dawood Rajiha
 Ministry of Defence
 Omayyad Square
 Damascus,
 Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 113110554
Salutation: Your Excellency

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

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Syrian security forces have been carrying out widespread arrests in response to mass protests calling for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to step down, which began in mid-March 2011. The arrests have targeted people perceived to have organized or openly supported those protests, whether orally in public gatherings, in the media, on the internet or elsewhere. They include journalists, political and human rights activists, and mosque imams. The wave of arrests has forced a number of activists and journalists into hiding. Among a number of individuals who have been detained on apparent account of the activities of their relatives are 'Abd al-Rahman Hammada, brother-in-law of human rights lawyer Razan Zaitouneh, who remains in hiding, and Mu'ayad al-Bunni, the 18-year-old son of Walid al-Bunni, a prominent political activist and former prisoner of conscience, who is also detained.

Torture and other ill-treatment is very widely reported in Syria and Amnesty International has published the names and other details concerning 88 individuals who were reported to have died in custody from 1 April to mid-August 2011. See the report *Deadly Detention: Deaths in custody amid popular protest in Syria* (Index: MDE 24/0352011).

Name: Yassin Ziadeh
Gender m/f: m

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