

URGENT ACTION

POLITICAL ACTIVIST VANISHES, NEEDS MEDICAL HELP

Syrian political activist Fa'eq 'Ali Asa'd has not been seen since 7 October, when he is believed to have been arrested in Damascus. He suffers from kidney problems and it is not clear whether he has access to medical attention.

A local contact has told Amnesty International that **Fa'eq 'Ali Asa'd** (who is generally known as Fa'eq al-Mir) left the house he was renting near Baghdad Street in the al-Koussour area of Damascus, a part of the city which is under the control of government forces, at around 10 am on 7 October. He had said that he expected to come back around an hour later, but instead a group of around 10 armed men in civilian clothing came to the house at about that time. According to the contact, Fa'eq al-Mir's family believe they were members of the Syrian security forces. The men indicated that Fa'eq al-Mir had been arrested but gave no further information. They intimidated the family and raided the house, confiscating electrical equipment and other items.

It is not clear where Fa'eq al-Mir is held or why he would have been arrested, though Amnesty International's contact believes he may have been detained for his political activity with the unauthorized Syrian Democratic People's Party and other political opposition activities. When he was arrested, Fa'eq al-Mir had been in hiding from the security forces. This is the third time the 59-year-old assistant engineer has been arrested. He was jailed for 10 years in 1989 for his political activities, and again in December 2006, when he spent two years in prison for "circulating false or exaggerated news which would weaken the morale of the nation", a charge the Syrian authorities often used to repress dissent.

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

- Calling on the authorities to inform Fa'eq al-Mir's family urgently of his fate and whereabouts, and release him immediately and unconditionally if he has been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Urging them to treat him with humanity and ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and brought promptly before an ordinary civilian court and allowed immediate contact with his family and lawyers of his choice;
- Urging the authorities to grant Fa'eq al-Mir access to any medical attention he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:

President

Bashar al-Assad

Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)

(If voice answers, say "Fax". Fax is the only reliable communication method; please do not send letters)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Major General Mohamad Ibrahim al-Shaar

Fax: +963 11 311 0554

(If voice answers, say "Fax". Fax is the only reliable communication method; please do not send letters)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Permanent Representative to the UN

Bashar Ja'afari

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017

Fax: +1212 983 4439;

E-mail: exexec.syria@gmail.com or syrianmission@verizonmail.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

Where appropriate, please also send copies to the Syrian and Russian 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

Fa'eq al-Mir suffers from hydronephrosis (literally “water in the kidneys”), as well as frequent kidney stones. He had these surgically removed, but has suffered recurring kidney problems, for which he requires medical intervention and regular monitoring.

Fa'eq al-Mir had been in hiding since February 2010, when a friend of his, Syrian writer Raghda Hassan, was arrested while travelling to Lebanon, where she was due to visit critics of the Syrian government who had fled to avoid arrest or persecution. For more information, see *Syria: Syrian writer brought to trial: Raghda Sa'id Hassan* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/029/2010/en>). According to Amnesty International's contact, shortly after her arrest, members of the Syrian security forces arrived at Fa'eq al-Mir's home in the coastal city of Tartous to arrest him. He was not there at the time, and managed to go into hiding to avoid arrest. He was sentenced in his absence to 15 years' imprisonment, on a similar charge to that levelled against Raghda Hassan: “weakening national sentiments”, a charge often used against peaceful government critics. Raghda Hassan was eventually released on 2 June 2011, as part of a presidential amnesty.

For more information on Fa'eq al-Mir's 2006 arrest and imprisonment, see *Syria: Amnesty International calls for release of political activist* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/001/2008/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>). Hundreds have died in the custody of the Syrian security forces since the unrest began in March 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>).

Although the vast majority of the human rights abuses documented by Amnesty International have been committed by the state's armed forces and pro-government *shabiha* militias, abuses have also been committed by armed opposition groups. This includes the torture and killing of captured members of the security forces and *shabiha* militia members as well as the abduction and killing of people known or suspected of supporting or working with the government and its forces, or the taking of civilians as hostages to try to negotiate prisoner swaps. Amnesty International condemns without reservation such abuses and has called on the leadership of all armed opposition groups in Syria to state publicly that such acts are prohibited and to do all in their power to ensure that opposition forces put an immediate stop to them. See *Syria: Summary killings and other abuses by armed opposition groups* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE24/008/2013/en>).

Name: Fa'eq 'Ali Asa'd
Gender m/f: m

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