

# URGENT ACTION

## TWO STUDENTS INCOMMUNICADO, HEALTH AT RISK

**Two Syrian students, Marwa and her brother Mohamed Tuffaha, have been held incommunicado at an unknown location for over two months in conditions that amount to enforced disappearance. Both require regular medication.**

**Marwa Tuffaha** was arrested on 2 October at her family's house in the Roukn al-Din neighbourhood of the capital, Damascus. According to a relative living abroad, a group of armed men in civilian clothes, believed to be from Air Force Intelligence, came into the house on 1 October to look for her brother, **Mohamed Tuffaha**. He was not there, so they waited for him and reportedly also cut off the family's phone. The next day some of the men took Marwa Tuffaha away, telling her family they would let her go once they had found her brother. The remaining men stayed to wait for Mohamed to return to the house, but left after four days as he had not done so. The same source believes that Mohamed Tuffaha was arrested on or around 10 October as he has not been heard from since then. He and his sister both need regular medication, which they may not be receiving. Marwa Tuffaha requires medication to control pituitary gland problems.

According to the relative abroad, unofficial sources claimed Marwa Tuffaha was taken to the nearby Air Force Intelligence branch but officials there denied that they were holding either her or her brother and did not accept any of the medication that had been brought for her. An official source within the National Reconciliation Committee told the family in late October that Marwa Tuffaha would be released shortly, while her brother would be detained for at least another 20 days for continued investigation. Both are still detained and their whereabouts, condition and legal status are unknown. It appears that Marwa Tuffaha has been detained solely on account of her family relationship with Mohamed Tuffaha. If so, she is a prisoner of conscience and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

- Urging the authorities to reveal the whereabouts of Marwa and Mohamed Tuffaha without delay, and grant them immediate access to their family, lawyer and any medical attention they may require;
- Calling on them to release Marwa Tuffaha immediately and unconditionally if she is detained solely on account of her relationship with her brother and to release Mohamed Tuffaha unless he is charged promptly with a recognizably criminal offence and tried in accordance with international fair trial standards;
- Urging them to ensure that Marwa and Mohamed Tuffaha are protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 JANUARY 2014 TO:**

#### President

Bashar al-Assad

Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)  
(fax/phone line – say "Fax") (Fax is the only reliable communication method; please do not send letters)

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Minister of Defence

'Imad al-Fraj

Fax: +963 11 223 7842 (keep trying)  
+963 11 666 2460 (keep trying)  
(fax/phone line – say "Fax")

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Permanent Representative to the UN

Bashar Ja'afari

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
820 Second Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017

Fax: +1 212 983 4439

E-mail: [exesec.syria@gmail.com](mailto:exesec.syria@gmail.com)  
[syrianmission@verizonmail.com](mailto: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

Marwa Tuffaha is a mathematics student and her brother Mohamed Tuffaha studies computer science.

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. 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 as well as the abduction and killing of people known or suspected to support or work with the government and its forces; and 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 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/info/MDE24/008/2013/en>).

Name: Marwa Tuffaha (f), Mohamed Tuffaha (m)

Gender m/f: both

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