

# URGENT ACTION

## SYRIAN WOMAN HELD INCOMMUNICADO

**Usra al-Hassani, a 35-year-old Syrian woman, has been held incommunicado for nearly two months. She is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.**

**Usra al-Hassani** was apparently arrested by State Security personnel in her family's home in the village of 'Otaybah, 20km east of Damascus, on 2 January. Since her arrest, Usra al-Hassani has been permitted no contact with the outside world and the authorities have not said where she is being held, why she was arrested or whether she will be charged.

Amnesty International believes that she may be held at the State Security branch in the capital Damascus, a detention centre notorious for torture and other ill-treatment, and that her arrest may be related to her alleged involvement in a poem inciting violence against an informant to the security forces.

Usra al-Hassani was previously detained incommunicado at the same centre from 31 July 2008 until 18 July 2009. She was detained by State Security after contacting an international organization about the detention of her husband, Jihad Diab. Jihad Diab has been held without charge or trial as an "enemy combatant" in the US detention centre at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, since August 2002..For more information, see UA 261/08 (Index: MDE 24/028/2008) and follow-up (where her name was given as Usra al-Hussein).

**PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic, English, French or your own language:**

- Expressing concern that Usra al-Hassani has been detained incommunicado for nearly two months;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that she will not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and to allow her immediately visits from her family, lawyer of her choosing and any medical treatment she may require;
- Urging the authorities to release Usra al-Hassani unless she is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial promptly in proceedings which meet international fair trial standards.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 APRIL 2010 TO:**

President

Bashar al-Assad  
Presidential Palace  
al-Rashid Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 332 3410**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Interior

Major Sa'id Mohamed Samour  
Ministry of Interior  
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 222 3428**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**And copies to:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Walid al-Mua'llim  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Abu Rummaneh  
al-Rashid Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

**Fax: +963 11 332 7620**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Syria 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

People suspected of affiliation to Islamist groups are at particular risk of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment in Syria. In August 2008, scores of individuals were arrested, mostly in Deir az-Zawr, but also in the cities of Aleppo and Hama. One of those arrested, Mohammed Amin al-Shawa, died in custody in January 2009; according to Syrian human rights organizations, he died as a result of being tortured. At least nine others remain in incommunicado detention at an unknown location.

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