

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN POLITICAL ACTIVIST ARRESTED

Syrian political activist and writer Louay Hussein was arrested by immigration officials on the Syrian side of the Lebanese-Syrian border on 12 November. He faces charges of “weakening national sentiment” and “weakening the morale of the nation”. He is currently being held at ‘Adra prison.

Louay Hussein, head of Building the Syrian State, a pro-democracy political movement, and an outspoken opposition writer, was travelling to Lebanon on 12 November 2014 from where he planned to travel to Spain to see his family. He was arrested by Syrian immigration officials on the Syrian side of the Lebanese-Syrian border and was immediately transferred to the Justice Palace in Damascus, the capital. A local contact told Amnesty International that on 13 November Louay Hussein appeared before the investigative judge who ordered his transfer to ‘Adra prison where he awaits trial.

According to the local contact, the investigative judge accused Louay Hussein of violating a travel ban issued on 7 July 2014 by the Ministry of Justice on the basis of an article he published on 24 June of the same year, in which he claimed that “the Syrian state is falling apart and collapsing”. The investigative judge has also accused him of “weakening national sentiment” and “weakening the morale of the nation”, charges that are commonly brought against peaceful political activists and human rights right defenders.

According to his wife, Louay Hussein had not been notified that a travel ban had been imposed on him in July. She said that he had travelled in and out of Syria on several occasions since July without any problem.

Louay Hussein was previously detained for five days on 22 March 2011 for publishing an online petition in solidarity with protestors in Dera’a and calling for the Syrian people’s right to peacefully express their opinions. He was also sentenced to seven years in prison in 1984 as a result for his involvement with the Communist Labour Party.

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

- Calling on the authorities to release Louay Hussein immediately and unconditionally as he is detained solely as the result of the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association;
- Urging the Syrian authorities to immediately grant him access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and any medical attention he may require;
- Urging them to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 DECEMBER 2014 TO:

Syrian Permanent Representative to the UN

Bashar Ja’afari, Ambassador
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
Fax: +1 212 983 4439
E-mail: exexec.syria@gmail.com
Salutation: Your Excellency

Syrian President

Bashar al-Assad
Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)
(If fax does not go through, please include your message to the president in an email to the Ambassador, asking for it to be forwarded)

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Interior in Syria
Major General Mohamad Ibrahim al-Shaar
Fax: +963 11 311 0554
(If fax does not go through, please include your message to the Minister of Interior in an email to the Ambassador, asking for it to be forwarded)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the start of the crisis in Syria, the Syrian government forces, pro-government militias and non-state armed groups continue to systematically target peaceful political activists, human rights defenders and humanitarian aid workers. Thousands of civilians are reported to have been arrested, detained, abducted, and subjected to torture and ill-treatment merely for exercising their human rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association; or for providing medical care and humanitarian assistance to civilians. Thousands of civilians are also reported to have been held incommunicado, or subjected to enforced disappearances, their families unsure of their fate, and fear for their well-being. For an insight into the international campaign that calls for the release of all civil society actors, media and medical workers arbitrarily detained and calls for accountability for those responsible for these violations, see: Free Syria's Silenced Voices (<http://free-syrian-voices.org/>).

Building the Syrian State is a pro-democracy political movement established on 10 September 2011 in Damascus. Louay Hussein is the co-founder and head of the movement. The movement's main objective is to create a democratic civil state that ensures freedom of speech and association, social justice and equality and good governance. The movement is also involved in developing an economic program based on neo-liberal economic reforms. The movement advocates for a peaceful political transition and is against arming the opposition.

Name: Louay Hussein

Gender m/f: m

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