

URGENT ACTION

WRITER GOES MISSING, FEARED ARRESTED

Syrian writer Jihad As'ad Mohamed has not been heard from since 10 August, when he is most likely to have been arrested on his way to visit his family in the Damascus suburb of Dummar.

According to a close friend of his, living abroad, **Jihad As'ad Mohamed** was last seen on 10 August 2013 at a family event in the Barzeh district of the Syrian capital, Damascus. He had intended to go on from there to visit other relatives in Dummar, north-west of Damascus. His mobile phone was switched off shortly after he set out, and he did not arrive in Dummar. He has not been heard from since he left Barzeh. His health is at risk, as he suffers from various food intolerances and has to follow a restricted diet and take medication to avoid allergic reactions.

It is feared he was arrested on the way to Dummar, as both the area near his family's house in Barzeh through which he would have had to travel and the area around Dummar were apparently under the control of the Syrian government at the time, and to get to Dummar, Jihad As'ad Mohamed would have had to pass at least a building of Air Force Intelligence. Unofficial sources later claimed that he was seen at the Air Force Intelligence branch but may have been moved from there to Branch 285 of the Syrian State Security.

Jihad As'ad Mohamed is a writer and has publicly advocated reform in Syria through his writing. He was summoned for questioning by State Security forces after he gave an interview to a Russian news channel. His friend says he has been concerned about being monitored by the security forces and the risk of arrest ever since.

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

- Calling on the Syrian authorities to immediately disclose Jihad As'ad Mohamed's 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 ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and allowed immediate contact with his family and lawyers of his choice;
- Urging them to grant Jihad As'ad Mohamed access to any medical attention he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 DECEMBER 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: +1 212 983 4439

E-mail: exexec.syria@gmail.com

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

Jihad As'ad Mohamed has been working as a journalist and writer in Syria for a number of years. He was the editor of the communist magazine *Kassiun*, founded by the Syrian National Committee for the Unity of Syrian Communists. After the start of the unrest in Syrian in March 2011, he published a number of articles advocating peaceful reform, criticizing the Syrian security forces' violent crackdown on peaceful protesters. His interview with Russia Today, which resulted in him being questioned by the security forces can be found here (in Arabic): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkPAldu0E4o>. Other articles can be found, in Arabic, at: <http://www.aleftoday.info/author.php?id=60>.

Amnesty International has documented human rights abuses against writers and journalists, committed both by the Syrian government and by some of the various armed groups active in Syria. For more information, see *Shooting the messenger: Journalists targeted by all sides in Syria* (Index: MDE 24/014/2013) of May 2013: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/014/2013/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* (Index: MDE 24/016/2012) of March 2012: <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* (Index: MD 24/035/2011) of August 2011: <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 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/info/MDE24/008/2013/en>).

Name: Jihad As'ad Mohamed

Gender m/f: m

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