

URGENT ACTION

STUDENT STILL DETAINED DESPITE RELEASE ORDER

A court ordered the release of Syrian student blogger Tal al-Mallohi on 23 October, but instead she was transferred from prison into the custody of Syrian State Security in Damascus, where she is still believed to be held. She is being held incommunicado, putting her at risk of torture.

Three months after a court ordered the release of student blogger **Tal al-Mallohi**, she continues to be held by the Syrian security forces. Tal al-Mallohi was arrested on 27 December 2009, when she was 18 years old, by Syrian State Security agents, who had summoned her for questioning. After spending nine months detained incommunicado by State Security, she was sentenced to five years in prison on 14 February 2011 by the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) after being convicted of disclosing secret information to a foreign country. Amnesty International believes that the SSSC, which was abolished in 2011, fell far short of international standards of fair trial and that Tal al-Mallohi's trial in particular was grossly unfair (see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/006/2011/en>).

A criminal court in Homs ordered her release on 23 October, as she had served three quarters of her sentence, at which point Syrian law allows convicted prisoners to request an early release. Her release was approved by both the Homs General Prosecutor and the Rif Dimashq Prosecutor, under whose jurisdiction 'Adra prison, where she was detained, falls. Shortly after this decision, Tal al-Mallohi was transferred to one of the State Security branches in Damascus, where she was last seen in late November. According to local contacts, her family have not been allowed to visit her there, or to bring her anything, despite their repeated attempts. Her current legal status is unclear and the security forces have given no reason for detaining her. She appears to be detained arbitrarily.

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

- Urging the authorities to ensure that the court order for Tal al-Mallohi's release is implemented;
- Calling on them to disclose her whereabouts without delay, and grant her immediate access to her family, lawyer and any medical attention she may require;
- Urging them to ensure that Tal al-Mallohi is protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 FEBRUARY 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, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017

Fax: +1 212 983 4439

E-mail: exesec.syria@gmail.com

syrianmission@verizonmail.com or

exesec.syria@gmail.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

Where appropriate, please also send copies to the Syrian and Russian 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. This is the first update of UA 203/10. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/025/2010/en

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has been following Tal al-Mallohi's case since her arrest in 2009. See for example: *Syria: Demand release for Syrian blogger* of September 2010 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/025/2010/en>) and *Syria: Tal al-Mallohi sentenced after flawed trial* of February 2011 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/006/2011/en>). During her incommunicado detention, it was believed that she might have been arrested for publishing articles and poems on various political and social issues in Syria, as the charges against her were not revealed to her family until her trial, over a year after her arrest.

During her trial, Tal al-Mallohi only had limited access to legal counsel and Amnesty International believes that the court that convicted her, the SSSC, generally fell short of international fair trial standards. For an analysis of the court, see *Memorandum on the Supreme State Security Court: A summary of Amnesty International's Concerns* of 1 August 2007 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/039/2007/en>). The court was abolished following reform pledges by the Syrian government in April 2011.

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: Tal al-Mallohi

Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 203/10 Index: MDE 24/064/2013 Issue Date: 23 December 2013