

# URGENT ACTION

## SYRIAN PRISONER RELEASED, BROTHER STILL HELD

**'Abd al-Rahman Hammada was released on bail on 27 June 2011 after spending a month and a half in detention. He was reportedly tortured during the first two weeks of his detention. His brother Wa'el Hammada has been held incommunicado since his arrest on 12 May. Amnesty International is gravely concerned for his safety.**

**'Abd al-Rahman Hammada** was arrested on 30 April and held for the first six weeks of his detention in the custody of Air Force Security, an intelligence agency with powers of arrest and detention, in Damascus. On 14 June, he was transferred to 'Adra prison, located in the outskirts of Damascus, and remained there until his release. He is now back with his family but is awaiting trial on several charges including "weakening national sentiment" (Article 285 of the Syrian Penal Code) and "conveying within Syria false news that could debilitate the morale of the nation" (Article 286). According to sources in Syria, these charges relate to his family relationship with **Wa'el Hammada** and sister-in-law Razan Zaitouneh, both peacefully involved in popular protests calling for political reform.

Wa'el Hammada is understood to be held in the custody of Air Force Security. Amnesty International believes that he is a prisoner of conscience detained for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association and his marriage to Razan Zaitouneh. He is also believed to have been tortured.

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

- Welcoming the release of 'Abd al-Rahman Hammada but calling for the charges against him to be dropped, as Amnesty International believes they relate solely to the peaceful involvement of his brother and sister-in-law in protests;
- Expressing concern about reports that both 'Abd al-Rahman and Wael Hammada were tortured in the custody of Air Force Security and urging the authorities to investigate the allegations and ensure that anyone found responsible is brought to justice;
- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Wa'el Hammada as Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience;
- Expressing concern, in the meantime, that Wa'el Hammada remains held incommunicado, and calling on the authorities to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and granted immediate access to his family, legal counsel of his own choosing, and any medical attention he may require.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 AUGUST 2011 TO:**

#### President

Bashar al-Assad  
 Presidential Palace  
 al-Rashid Street  
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
 Fax: +963 11 332 3410

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Minister of Foreign Affairs

Walid al-Mu'allim  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 al-Rashid Street  
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
 Fax: +963 11 214 6251

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

### **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. This is the second update of UA 149/11. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/020/2011/en> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/023/2011/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Political activist Wa'el Hammada, aged 35, and his wife, Razan Zaitouneh, a leading human rights activist, went into hiding in April. They feared being arrested because of their peaceful activities in relation to the current popular protests calling for political reform.

'Abd al-Rahman Hammada, a 20-year-old accountant student, was arrested on 30 April when he went to the couple's flat to get them some clothes, although, according to the family, he has not been involved in the protests. Twelve days later Wa'el Hammada was arrested at his workplace.

The two men's whereabouts remained unknown until early June, when Razan Zaitouneh learned through reliable sources that both men were held in Damascus by Air Force Security and that they had been tortured.

Amnesty International later learned that while detained 'Abd al-Rahman Hammada never met his brother.

Name: 'Abd al-Rahman Hammada, Wa'el Hammada

Gender m/f: Both male

Further information on UA: 149/11 Index: MDE 24/033/2011 Issue Date: 7 July 2011

