

URGENT ACTION

FEARS FOR MAN HELD INCOMMUNICADO IN SYRIA

Syrian man, Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud, was arrested from his workplace in Sweida, Damascus suburbs, on 16 June and has been held incommunicado ever since. He is believed to have previously been tortured in detention by Syrian security forces.

Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud, aged 25, was last seen leaving the Tamreedh School in Sweida, a town in the suburbs of Damascus, the capital, where he works. He had been previously detained from 9 October 2011 to 13 January 2012 in a branch of the Air Force Intelligence. He told his family after his release that he had been subjected to torture or other ill-treatment during his detention. He was released during a general amnesty before being arrested again in June 2012.

Following a visit to enquire about his whereabouts on 19 September, a member of Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud's family was told by the Syrian authorities in Sweida that he was being held at the Air Force Intelligence branch in Harasta, Damascus. The authorities have not disclosed the reasons for Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud's arrest or whether there are any formal charges against him. Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud has not been granted access to a lawyer or his family since his arrest.

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

- Expressing concern that Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud has been held incommunicado since 16 June, and urging the Syrian authorities to grant him immediate access to his family, a lawyer of his choice, and all necessary medical treatment;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment;
- Calling on the authorities to release Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud unless he is promptly charged with a internationally recognizable criminal offence and tried in a civilian court, in proceedings that respect international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 NOVEMBER 2012 TO:

President

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defence

His Excellency 'Imad al-Fraj
Ministry of Defence, Omayyad Square
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 223 7842,
+963 11 666 2460

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 6253

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

FEARS FOR MAN HELD INCOMMUNICADO IN SYRIA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Thousands of suspected opponents of the government have been arrested in Syria since protests broke out in February 2011 and many, if not most, are believed to have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Amnesty International has received the names of more than 570 people reported to have died in custody during this period and has documented many cases of torture or other ill-treatment. See *'I wanted to die': Syria's torture survivors speak out* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>).

Since protests broke out, the situation has evolved into an internal armed conflict throughout much of the country. 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 soldiers and *shabiha* militia members as well as the abduction and killing of people known or suspected to support or work with the government and its forces, or 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.

Systematic and widespread human rights abuses, including crimes against humanity and possible war crimes have become rife in Syria, where civilians are the main victims. Amnesty International has documented numerous examples, most recently in documents such as *Indiscriminate attacks terrorize and displace civilians* Index: MDE 24/078/2012, 23 August 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/078/2012/en>).

Other bodies such as the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic have made similar findings, including in their most recent report published on 15 August 2012.

In light of this, Amnesty International is continuing to call for the situation in Syria to be referred to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The organization is also calling for an international arms embargo aimed at halting the flow of weapons to the Syrian government, and an assets freeze on President Bashar al-Assad and his close associates. Additionally, states considering supplying weapons to the armed opposition should have in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure the material supplied is not used to commit human rights abuses and/or war crimes. The Syrian government should also allow the international independent commission of inquiry, and international human rights and humanitarian organizations, unfettered access to the country.

Name: Maher Fawzi al-Hamoud
Gender m/f: Male

UA: 277/12 Index: MDE 24/079/2012 Issue Date: 26 September 2012