

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH WORKER DETAINED, ALLEGEDLY TORTURED

Syrian Arab Red Crescent worker Mohamed Raed al-Tawil has been held in incommunicado detention at an unknown location since his arrest in Damascus, the Syrian capital, on 8 November. He is believed to have been subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

According to a local contact, **Mohamed Raed al-Tawil** was at work at the Damascus headquarters of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent when an unknown man entered the office. The man asked Mohamed Raed al-Tawil to join him in the street under the pretence of having noticed that the lights in his car were on. When Mohamed Raed al-Tawil exited the building, a group of armed men arrested Mohamed Raed al-Tawil. According to an Amnesty International contact, they did not provide any reasons for his arrest, but had an arrest warrant issued by Political Security.

The Syrian authorities have not notified Mohamed Raed al-Tawil's family about his detention, his current whereabouts or any charges against him, despite repeated inquiries by his family and friends.

The same contact told Amnesty International that a detainee released on 13 November claims to have shared a cell with Mohamed Raed al-Tawil at a Damascus branch of State Security. The former detainee said that, on one occasion, Mohamed Raed al-Tawil was taken to another room nearby and that he heard him screaming and being interrogated about providing medical assistance to members of the armed opposition. He also said that when Mohamed Raed al-Tawil was returned to their shared cell, he had bruises and other wounds on his body, and told him that he had been tortured and was suffering from severe back pain as a result.

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

- Urging the Syrian authorities to reveal the whereabouts of Mohamed Raed al-Tawil and ensure that he is protected from torture or other ill-treatment, is given immediate access to his family and lawyer and any medical care he may require;
- Asking for clarification of Mohamed Raed al-Tawil's legal status, and calling on the authorities to release him if he is not to be charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence, and tried according to international fair trial standards;
- Calling on the Syrian authorities to promptly set up an independent and impartial investigation into allegations that Mohamed Raed al-Tawil was subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 DECEMBER 2012 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 Interior

Major General Mohamad Ibrahim al-Shaar

Fax: +963 11 311 0554

(fax/phone line – say "Fax") (Fax is the only reliable communication method; please do not send letters)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Walid al-Mu'allim

Fax: +963 11 214 6253 (keep trying)

(fax/phone line – say "Fax") (Fax is the only reliable communication method; please do not send letters)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Please send copies to diplomatic representatives of the Russian Federation 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

Mohamed Raed al-Tawil has been working in different capacities with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent for approximately 18 years. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent is part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Amnesty International has previously documented human rights abuses against injured people and health workers, including many who had treated wounded individuals without informing the authorities about them to protect them from arrest and possible torture. For more information, please see Amnesty International's report *Health crisis: Syrian government targets the wounded and health workers*, October 2011 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/059/2011/en>).

For an insight into torture and other ill-treatment in Syria's detention centres, please see *I wanted to die: Syria's torture survivors speak out*, March 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>).

Amnesty International has received the names of some 650 persons believed to have died in the custody of the Syrian security forces since the beginning of the unrest – nearly 500 of them in 2012 alone. Amnesty International documented this practice in August 2011: *Deadly detention: Deaths in custody amid popular protest in Syria* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/035/2011/en>).

Go to the interactive Eyes on Syria map (www.eyesonsyria.org) to see where human rights violations are being committed in Syria, and Amnesty International's global activism to seek justice.

Name: Mohamed Raed al-Tawil

Gender m/f: m

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