

URGENT ACTION

POET ARRESTED, LIFE IN DANGER

Poet Nasser Saber Bondek was arrested on 17 February at his home by people believed to be members of the Syrian security forces. His whereabouts are unknown and his life is in danger: a man arrested in the same neighbourhood that day died in custody.

Nasser Saber Bondek's wife, Farizah Jahjah Bondek, who lives abroad, told Amnesty International that a local contact had told her that members of the Syrian security forces believed to be Military Intelligence arrived at Nasser Saber Bondek's house in the Damascus suburb of Sahnaya at around 6.30pm on 17 February, arrested him and broke items in the house. A released detainee has reported seeing Nasser Saber Bondek shortly after his arrest at the Military Intelligence Branch 227 in Damascus. Since then, his wife has not received any information on his whereabouts, though an unofficial source told her in late April that he was "ok".

Among those who were arrested in Sahnaya that day are human rights lawyer Jihan Amin and student Ranim Ma'touq, (whose father, human rights lawyer Khalil Ma'touq, has been subjected to enforced disappearance) and another man, whose body was returned to his family about three weeks later, from the same Military Intelligence branch where Nasser Saber Bondek was last seen. A local contact told Amnesty International that a judge ordered Jihan Amin's provisional release on 29 April after questioning her about "distributing aid to terrorists" due to accusations that she had assisted people internally displaced as a result of the armed conflict in Syria and who are perceived by the Syrian authorities as families of what they consider as 'terrorists'. Ranim Ma'touq is still detained, and is on trial also for "distributing aid to terrorists" due to similar accusations that she had assisted internally displaced people.

The exact reasons for Nasser Saber Bondek's arrest are unknown. His wife told Amnesty International that he engaged in humanitarian assistance activities, such as aiding the internally displaced. Farizah Jahjah Bondek is a peaceful political activist herself, and is known for attending demonstrations. She had fled Syria with their children out of fear of arrest by the authorities before her husband was arrested.

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

- Urging the Syrian authorities to reveal the whereabouts and legal status of Nasser Saber Bondek, grant him immediate access to his family, lawyer and any medical attention he may require;
- Urging them to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Calling on them to release him if he is not promptly charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JULY 2014 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 Defence

General Fahd Jassem al-Freij

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

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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nasser Saber Bondek works at part of the Ministry of Information, the Arab Organization for Advertising. He also writes poetry. He is originally from al-Suwayda, a predominantly Druze area in southern Syria near the Jordanian border. For further information on the two women also arrested in Sahnaya, see UA 38/14, 21 February 2014 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/009/2014/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* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>). Thousands are reported to have died in the custody of the Syrian security forces since unrest began in 2011. 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>).

Name: Nasser Saber Bondek
Gender m/f: m

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