

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS IN UNKNOWN LOCATION, RISK TORTURE

Syrian activists Hanı al-Zıtani, Hussein Gharir and Mazen Darwish should have been presented in court on 1 June, but were not. Their whereabouts are unknown and they are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Hanı al-Zıtani, Hussein Gharir and Mazen Darwish worked documenting human rights violations in Syria, at the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM). They were detained by members of Syrian Air Force Intelligence during a raid on their office in Damascus on 16 February 2012. They were held incommunicado – hidden from their families and friends – in various security branches where, according to released detainees, they were tortured and otherwise ill-treated. In late November 2012 they were transferred to 'Adra Prison, where they were allowed access to their lawyers and families. They are awaiting the verdict of their trial before the Anti-Terrorism Court, where they have been charged with "promoting acts of terrorism" as a result of their work. They are prisoners of conscience.

A local contact told Amnesty International that the three men were last seen on 3 May 2015 at 'Adra Prison. When people came to visit them the following week, prison staff told them the three men were no longer held there, but did not say where the men had been taken. Recently released detainees have indicated that they may have been taken to a different detention facility on or around 6 May. Their current whereabouts are unknown and Amnesty International fears that they have been transferred back to a detention facility run by one of Syria's security forces, where torture and other ill-treatment are rife. These fears are heightened as they were scheduled to appear in court on 1 June, but were not presented.

Hanı al-Zıtani, Hussein Gharir and Mazen Darwish are still detained, despite calls for their release from UN bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

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

- Calling on the Syrian authorities to release Hanı al-Zıtani, Hussein Gharir and Mazen Darwish immediately and unconditionally;
- Urging them to disclose the men's whereabouts immediately;
- Urging them to ensure that the three men are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, allowed immediate contact with their families and lawyers, and provided with any medical attention they may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 JULY 2015 TO:

Permanent Representative to the UN

Bashar Ja'afari, Ambassador
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
Fax: +1 212 983 4439
E-mail: exesec.syria@gmail.com
Salutation: Your Excellency

President

Bashar al-Assad
Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)
(If fax does not go through, please include your message to the president in an email to the Ambassador, asking for it to be forwarded)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defence

General Fahd Jassem al-Freij
Fax: +963 11 223 7842 (keep trying)
+963 11 666 2460 (keep trying)
(If fax does not go through, please include your message to the Minister of Defence in an email to the Ambassador, asking for it to be forwarded)
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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has worked on the case of Hani al-Zitani, Hussein Gharir and Mazen Darwish since they were arrested in 2012 at the SCM's office along with a number of other SCM staff members and visitors present on the premises at the time of the raid. The SCM had been working on documenting violations of the right to freedom of expression, as well as the overall human rights situation in Syria. Amnesty International believes the raid took place because of the work the SCM was carrying out. While the rest of the people detained during the raid were released in the course of the following year, the three men were brought before the Anti-Terrorism Court in February 2013, but have not yet been sentenced. They last appeared in court on 15 April.

They are still held despite calls from the UN General Assembly, in resolution 67/262 of 15 May 2013, which asked for the three men to be released. In January 2014, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention also found that the three men had been arbitrarily deprived of their liberty due to their human rights activities and called for their immediate release. UN Security Council Resolution 2139, adopted on 22 February 2014, also demanded the release of all arbitrarily detained people in Syria.

Further information on their case can be found here:

Syria: Free human rights defenders held 3 years (public statement):

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/0010/2015/en/>

Syrian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Mazen Darwish and other detained activists (joint declaration)

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/017/2012/en/>

You may also wish to send the following tweets:

#disappeared since 6 May @Presidency_Sy where are prisoners of conscience Hani al-Zitani, Hussein Gharir & Mazen Darwish? #syria

.@Presidency_Sy prisoners of conscience Hani al-Zitani, Hussein Gharir & Mazen Darwish must be released without further delay #syria

Names: Hani al-Zitani, Hussein Gharir, Mazen Darwish

Gender m/f: m

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