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KHALIL MA'TOUQ

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED BY AGENTS OF THE SYRIAN STATE SINCE 2 OCTOBER 2012

Khalil Ma'touq is a human rights lawyer and the director of the Syrian Centre for Legal Studies and Research. He has defended hundreds of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Syria over many years.

He and his friend Mohammed Thatha are believed to have been arrested at a security checkpoint while on their way to Damascus and have not been seen or heard of since 2 October 2012.

The Syrian authorities have refused to provide information about the men to their lawyers and families but released detainees sporadically report having seen them in detention. Although the reasons for his arrest are unknown, his family and colleagues believe that it is due to his human rights work. He was previously banned from travelling between 2005 and 2011 and was unfairly sentenced in his absence in 2010 to two years' imprisonment, though he was not made to serve his sentence, also as a result of his human rights work. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

Khalil Ma'touq suffers from a chronic inflammatory condition of his lungs and has severe breathing difficulties due to reduced lung function. He requires regular medication and medical supervision and there are grave fears for his health as many people do not seem to receive the medical attention they require while held in Syrian detention facilities.

ACTION

Please write to the Syrian President through the Syria Permanent Representative to the UN to call on the Syrian authorities to:

- Release Khalil Ma'touq immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience;
- Urgently inform his family and lawyers of his fate and whereabouts; Grant him all necessary medical care, in civilian hospitals with specialized facilities if required.
- Ensure that he is protected from secret detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and allowed immediate contact with his family and a lawyer of his choice.

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