

# URGENT ACTION

## SYRIAN 'PEACE BRIDES' FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

**Four Syrian 'peace brides' have been held in conditions amounting to an enforced disappearance since their arrest while demonstrating on 21 November in Damascus. There are serious fears for the safety of the four women.**

Four Syrian women, **Ru'a Ja'far**, aged 24, **Rima Dali**, aged 33, as well sisters **Kinda al-Za'our**, aged 26 and **Lubna al-Za'our**, aged 22, were arrested in Damascus on 21 November after they dressed up as 'brides' and peacefully demonstrated for the end of violence in Syria.

The women were arrested from the Midhat Basha market in Damascus where they were peacefully demonstrating in white wedding dresses and carrying three banners; one calling for the end of all military operations in Syria, another with the words "Syria is for all of us", and one saying "We are all exhausted, we want another solution". Witnesses claim that security officials arrested the women from the market immediately following their demonstration.

Despite enquiring with the authorities about their whereabouts, relatives of the four women have not been informed where they are being held or by whom. Amnesty International believes that Ru'a Ja'far, Rima Dali, Kinda al-Za'our and Lubna al-Za'our are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly, and calls on the Syrian authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally.

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

- Call for the immediate and unconditional release of the four women as they have been arrested solely on account of their peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of association and assembly;
- Express concern that Ru'a Ja'far, Rima Dali, Kinda al-Za'our and Lubna al-Za'our have been held incommunicado since 21 November 2012 in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance;
- Pending their release, urge the Syrian authorities to ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, allowed immediate contact with their families and a lawyer of their choice, and provided with all necessary medical care.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 JANUARY 2013 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.**

**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**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This was the first demonstration of any kind for Ru'a Ja'far, Kinda al-Za'our and Lubna al-Za'our. Rima Dali has peacefully demonstrated by holding a red banner calling for an end to violence in Syria on three separate occasions since August 2011, and was arrested for several days following each demonstration. The banners held previously by Rima Dali and those held on the 21 November by the four women call on all sides to end military operations. Rima Dali is a law graduate and has previously worked for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Thousands of suspected opponents of the government have been arrested in Syria since pro-reform protests broke out in February 2011 and many, if not most, are believed to have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Amnesty International has the names of well-over 650 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 first 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 *Syria: Indiscriminate attacks terrorize and displace civilians* (Index: MDE 24/078/2012) (<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.

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: Ru'a Ja'far, Rima Dali, Kinda al-Za'our, Lubna al-Za'our  
Gender m/f: f

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