

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN MAN HELD AFTER MEDIA INTERVIEW

Syrian man Kamal Saloum has been missing since 11 February 2012 after he gave an interview with Al Jazeera following an earlier demonstration in his hometown of al-Suwayda, south Syria. He is being held incommunicado and there are fears for his health as it is unclear whether he has access to medical attention and regular medication which he requires to treat heart problems, diabetes and high blood pressure.

According to Syrian contacts, **Kamal Saloum** did not return home from work on 11 February. After making inquiries, his family were informed by an unofficial source inside the security forces that Kamal Saloum had been arrested by Air Force Intelligence officials in al-Suwayda that night. Following repeated inquiries by his family, an Air Force Intelligence officer confirmed this information a few days later. It is believed that Kamal Saloum has since been transferred to a Political Security branch in Damascus where he continues to be held, although the authorities have not revealed any further information about him.

Kamal Saloum's family attempted to bring medication to the Air Force Intelligence branch in al-Suwayda on various occasions, but were not allowed to leave anything for him. Kamal Saloum suffers from heart problems, high blood pressure and diabetes, and may have undergone heart surgery in recent months. His family believes his health is at serious risk as he needs to take necessary regular medication and they could not get confirmation that he has received adequate medical care.

No charges are known to have been brought against Kamal Saloum. His family believes his arrest is related to an interview he gave to the international news outlet Al Jazeera on 7 February following a raid on his house by Syrian security forces after a demonstration on 3 February in his neighbourhood. If Kamal Saloum is held solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression, then he may be a prisoner of conscience who should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

- Urging the Syrian authorities to reveal the whereabouts and legal status of Kamal Saloum, and ensure that he is provided with all necessary medical care, and is given immediate access to his family and lawyer;
- Expressing concern that Kamal Saloum may be a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression and should this be case the, released immediately and unconditionally.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 APRIL 2012 TO:

President

Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace, al-Rashid Street
Damascus,
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Major General Mohamad Ibrahim al-Shaar, Ministry of Interior,
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
Damascus,
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 211 9578 (keep trying)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Walid al-Mu'allim
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
al-Rashid Street
Damascus,
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 214 6253 (keep trying)
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

Pro-reform demonstrations began in Syria in February 2011 and evolved into mass protests in mid-March. The Syrian authorities have responded in the most brutal manner in their efforts to suppress them. Amnesty International has obtained the names of more than 6500 people reported to have died or been killed during, or in connection with, the protests and unrest. Many are believed to have been shot by security forces using live ammunition while participating in peaceful protests or attending funerals of people killed in earlier protests. More recently, hundreds have been killed during the shelling of civilian areas by Syrian armed forces, particularly in the city of Homs. Members of the security forces have also been killed, some by defecting members of the army and others who have taken up arms against the government.

Thousands of people have been arrested, with many held incommunicado at unknown locations at which torture and other ill-treatment are reported to be rife.

The Syrian state has multiple security and intelligence agencies in addition to even more opaque groups, often armed but not necessarily uniformed, who also carry out abductions, killings and other abuses in apparent coordination with, or at least approval of, state officials. Amnesty International has also received reports of armed individuals threatening, abusing and, in some cases, killing people perceived to be linked to or supportive of the state.

According to Amnesty International's source, a pro-democracy demonstration took place near Kamal Saloum's house on 3 February 2012. Following this, approximately 70 members of the Syrian security forces, both uniformed and in plain clothes arrived at Kamal Saloum's house in order to search for political activists that had attended the demonstration. They were unable to find anyone but reportedly damaged some of Kamal Saloum's family's property during the raid. Kamal Saloum later described these events to Al Jazeera, which may have led to his arrest.

Following his arrest, Kamal Saloum's office, where he practices as an accountant, was reportedly raided and some of his property was confiscated by members of the Syrian security forces.

Name: Kamal Saloum

Gender m/f: Male

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