

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN WOMAN AT RISK OF TORTURE IN DETENTION

Young Syrian activist Hanadi Zahlout has been held incommunicado at an unknown location since her arrest in Damascus, Syria, on 4 August. She is at serious risk of torture or other ill-treatment. Amnesty International fears that she may have been subjected to enforced disappearance.

Hanadi Zahlout, born in 1982, is a women's rights activist and a member of the Local Coordination Committees (LCC) – a network of committees responsible for organizing and planning protests. She was among a group of young people who were arrested from a cafe in Damascus, close to where she lives, on 4 August. According to a fellow detainee who was later released, she was originally held at the Political Security branch in al-Fayha, Damascus. The same source claimed that Hanadi Zahlout was forced to watch a colleague being tortured in order to extract information on her political activities. Amnesty International believes that she is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Her current location is unclear and her family is too afraid to inquire with the security forces.

Amnesty International has no information on whether any charges have been brought against Hanadi Zahlout, but is concerned that she may be detained solely for exercising peacefully her rights to freedom of expression and assembly. Should this be the case, Amnesty International would consider her to be a prisoner of conscience and call for her immediate and unconditional release.

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

- Expressing concern that Hanadi Zahlout has been held incommunicado at an unknown location since 4 August 2011, putting her at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment, and ask for her whereabouts and legal status to be revealed immediately;
- Expressing concern that Hanadi Zahlout may be held solely for her peaceful pro-reform activities, in which case she would be a prisoner of conscience and should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that Hanadi Zahlout is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, allowed immediate contact with her family and a lawyer of her choice, and provided with any medical attention she may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 OCTOBER 2011 TO:

President

Bashar al-Assad
 Presidential Palace
 al-Rashid Street
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 11 332 3410

Salutation: Your Excellency

Ministry of Interior

His Excellency Major General Mohamad
 Ibrahim al-Shaar
 Minister of Interior
 'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 11 311 0554

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs and

Expatriates

Walid al-Mu'allim
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
 Expatriates
 al-Rashid Street
 Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
 Fax: +963 11 214 62512/3

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

Syrian security forces have been carrying out widespread arrests in response to mass protests calling for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to step down, which began in mid-March 2011. The arrests have targeted people perceived to have organized or openly supported those protests, whether orally in public gatherings, in the media, on the internet or elsewhere. They include journalists, political and human rights activists, and mosque imams. The wave of arrests has forced a number of activists and journalists into hiding.

Amnesty International has gathered sufficient information to indicate that interrogators in detention facilities question detainees under torture.

Name: Hanadi Zahlout
Gender m/f: female

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