



Syria

13 October 2010

Sentencing to prison of Mr. Abdul Hafiez Abdul Rahman - SYR 002 / 1010 / OBS 033.1

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the sentencing to prison of Mr. Abdul Hafiez Abdul Rahman, member of the Board of Trustees of the Human Rights Organisation in Syria (MAF), an organisation which defends the rights of the Kurdish minority in Syria.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), has received new information and requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in Syria.

New information:

According to the information received, on September 29, 2010, Mr. **Abdul Rahman** was sentenced by the third military individual judge in Aleppo to one year imprisonment, under Article 288 of the Criminal Code which prohibits membership of "secret organisations".

The Observatory expresses its deep concern about the charges brought against Mr. Abdul Rahman and his conviction, which seems to merely aim at sanctioning his human rights activities, in a context of constant harassment against human rights lawyers and activists in Syria.

The Observatory further fears for Mr. Abdul Rahman's physical and psychological integrity and calls upon the Syrian authorities to take prompt action in order to immediately and unconditionally release him, as well as all human rights defenders presently detained in the country. These events illustrate once more the situation of extreme insecurity faced by human rights defenders in Syria.

Background information:

On March 2, 2010, Mr. Abdul Rahman was arrested in his house in the Ashrafieh district, Aleppo, along with his co-worker Ms. Nadira Abdu who was with him at the time. Ms. Nadira Abdu was later released on March 6, 2010 whereas Mr. Abdul Rahman remains detained as to date. They were detained at the military security branch in Aleppo city north. Then Mr. Abdul Rahman was transferred to the Central Prison in Aleppo called Meslmeeh. No charges have been officially brought against the two human rights defenders at the time of their arrest.

During the raid, the security patrol asked Ms. Nadira Abdu why she came to Mr. Abdul Rahman's house three times a

day. They also asked the two defenders about different cases they were working on and, more generally, about their work within the Human Rights Organisation in Syria. They confiscated some reports issued by MAF as well as Mr. Abdul Hafiez's computer and several books written in Kurdish. The patrol failed to display any legal warrant to justify this procedure.

Actions requested:

Please write to the Syrian authorities authorities, urging them to:

- I. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Abdul Rahman;
- II. ensure the immediate and unconditionally release of Mr. Abdul Rahman since his detention is arbitrary as it only aims at sanctioning his human rights activities;
- III. Order a thorough and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned facts in order to identify all those responsible for harassment against Mr. Abdul Rahman and Ms. Nadira Abdu, prosecute and try them before a competent and impartial tribunal;
- IV. Put an end to any acts of harassment, including at the judicial level, against Mr. Abdul Rahman and more generally against all human rights defenders in Syria;
- V. Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially its Article 1, which states that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels", and Article 12.2, which provides that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration";
- VI. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by the Syrian Arab Republic.

Addresses:

·President, His Excellency Bashar al-Assad, Presidential Palace, al Rashid Street, Damascus, Syria Arab Republic, Fax: +963 11 332 3410

·Minister of Defence, His Excellency General, Ali Habib Mahmud, Ministry of Defence, O mayyad Square, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, Fax: +963 11 223 7842

·Minister of Justice, His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Hamod Younes, Mazeh "Otstrad", Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, Fax: +963 11 666 2460

·Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Wallid Mu'allim, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, al-Rashid Street, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, Fax: +963 11 332 7620

·Ambassador Faysal Khabbaz Hamoui, Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to UN in Geneva, 72 rue de Lausanne, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 738 42 75, Email: mission.syria@ties.itu.in

·Embassy the Syrian Arab Republic in Brussels, 1 avenue F.D. Roosevelt, 1050 Brussels, Belgium, Tel: +32 2 554 19 22; Fax: +32 2 648 14 85

Please also write to the diplomatic mission or embassy of the Syrian Arabic Republic in your respective country.

<http://www.fidh.org/Sentencing-to-prison-of-Mr-Abdul-Hafiez-Abdul>