



Syria

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Syria: Lifting of state of emergency falls short of significant reforms in light of increased repression

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organisation in Syria, the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies (DCHRS) take note of the announcement made Today April 19, 2011 by the Council of Ministers of Syria that the state of emergency will be lifted by next week.

While this gesture is long awaited, it falls short of significant human rights reforms. Evidence in the field also demonstrates the hardening of the response of the security forces to the spreading protests.

Over the past days, Syrian security forces have once again used live ammunition to silence growing peaceful protests in several cities. According to the information received, at least 30 demonstrators died and hundreds have been wounded in the provinces of Homs and Lattakiyeh following shootings by security forces, between April 16 and 19, 2011. Witnesses also reported attacks including gunshots against protesters trying to help the wounded, obstacles to the access to hospital and arrests of wounded protesters inside hospitals.

Arbitrary arrests of demonstrators also dramatically increased. According to Human rights NGOs in Syria, the city of Homs is almost besieged as a consequence of an ongoing protest which began on April 16, 2011.

On April 16, the body of a demonstrator arrested a few days earlier was given back to his family. The body showed stigmata of torture which leads to believe that he died as a consequence of torture. The next day at his funeral, the security forces opened fire on those who had gathered to attend the services. 14 people were killed. On April 18 around 15 000 people demonstrated in the main square in Homs, the New clock square following the funeral of the 14 people killed the previous day. During the night, the security forces opened fire on people gathered at the New Clock square in order to disperse the sit in. Protesters ran away from the square and some of them were beaten and arrested. Moreover, shootings have been recorded in the city of Talbissya on April 17 after demonstrators took down a statue of former president Hafez Al-Assad and brought it to the city of Rastan. According to witnesses, several people were killed in Talbissya.

Since the beginning of the protests and until April 15, 2011, DCHRS documented 195 people who were killed and more than 1000 cases of people who were arrested by the Syrian security forces ([click here to access the list](#)).

FIDH and DCHRS strongly condemn the ongoing bloody repression of peaceful protests in Syria and call upon the Syrian authorities to:

* immediately end the systematic repression against peaceful demonstrators and to hold those responsible of

summary executions accountable; * guarantee the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful demonstration in Syria * engage into political reforms towards a democratic transition * ensure that any law pertaining to national security will meet the requirements of international human rights law.

FIDH and DCHRS reiterate their call to the United Nations Security Council to denounce the summary executions of the civilian population, under its Responsibility to Protect and to the UN Human Rights Council to convene a Special Session on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic.

<http://www.fidh.org/Syria-Lifting-of-state-of-emergency-falls-short>