

URGENT ACTION

TORTURE FEARS FOR KURDISH RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Kurdish rights activist Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled has been detained in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance since his arrest on 3 September 2012 by persons believed to be part of Syria's State Security. There are fears he may have been subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

According to a local contact, **Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled**, who belongs to Syria's Kurdish minority and is a member of the Union of Young Kurds in Syria, a group of Kurdish activists, was arrested along with a group of others when persons believed to be from Syria's State Security carried out a raid against his neighbourhood in Wadi al-Mashari'a, north-west of Damascus, in the early hours of the morning. The security forces did not provide any reasons for his arrest, nor did they inform anyone as to where they were taking him.

The same contact told Amnesty International that the family had since tried to find out about his whereabouts. They visited 'Adra prison, north-east of Damascus, but were told that Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled was not among those detained there. A released detainee later claimed that he saw Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled at a State Security branch.

This is the third time Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled has been detained by the Syrian authorities. His first detention occurred after he was arrested in March 2004 in the context of the unrest in his hometown of Qamishly, north-eastern Syria, and then sentenced to two years in prison by the Supreme State Security Court, a court which was abolished in 2011 and whose proceedings fell far short of international fair trial standards. Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled was released after a little over one year in prison following a presidential pardon. He said after his release that he had been tortured during his detention. He was arrested again in March 2011 and detained for over 50 days in the custody of the Syrian Military Intelligence.

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

- Urging the Syrian authorities to reveal the whereabouts of Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled, grant him immediate access to his family, lawyer and any medical attention he may need;
- Urging the Syrian authorities to ensure that he is protected from torture or other ill-treatment;
- Calling on the Syrian authorities to release him unless he is charged with a recognizably criminal offence and tried in accordance with international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 NOVEMBER 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)

Salutation: Your Excellence

Where appropriate, please also send copies to the Syrian and Russian diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please also send copies to the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations:

His Excellency Bashar Ja'afari, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, 820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017

Fax: +1212 983 4439; E-mail: exesec.syria@gmail.com

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

TORTURE FEARS FOR KURDISH RIGHTS ACTIVIST

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kurds comprise up to 10 per cent of the population of Syria and reside mostly around the city of Aleppo in the north of the country and the al-Jazeera region in the north-east. Amnesty International has documented other cases of Kurdish activists subjected to enforced disappearance, such as activist Shibal Ibrahim and writer Hussein 'Essou. See *Syria: Health Concerns for detained Syrian activist: Shibal Ibrahim* (Index: MDE 24/007/2012), issued on 24 January 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/007/2012/en>) and *Syria: Detained Kurdish Writer at Risk of torture* (Index MDE 24/055/2011), issued on 15 September 2011 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/055/2011/en>). Shibal Ibrahim is also a member of the Union of Young Kurds in Syria. He was released from detention following a special amnesty issued by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on 29 May 2013. He said that only after his release did he find out that a hearing he had had in September 2012 with a judge from the Anti-Terrorism Court, which according to him only lasted for only a few minutes and was conducted without a lawyer present, was in actual fact a trial following which he was sentenced without his knowledge to 15 years in prison. Hussein 'Essou, remains detained in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance.

Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled's detention in 2004 was documented in an Amnesty International report entitled *Syria: Kurds in the Syrian Arab Republic one year after the March 2004 events* (Index: MDE 24/002/2005), issued in March 2005 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/002/2005/en>). According to an Amnesty International source, the torture he suffered included having a tooth ripped out with a wire and being beaten to the point that vertebrae were damaged.

He is married and has three children, the youngest of whom was born after his arrest in September 2012.

For an insight into the widespread torture and other ill-treatment in Syria's detention centres, please see *I wanted to die: Syria's torture survivors speak out* (Index: MDE 24/016/2012), issued in March 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>). Hundreds have died in the custody of the Syrian security forces since the beginning of the unrest. Amnesty International documented this practice in the report *Deadly detention: Deaths in custody amid popular protest in Syria* (Index: MDE 24/035/2011), issued in August 2011 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/035/2011/en>).

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 members of the security forces 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. See *Syria: Summary killings and other abuses by armed opposition groups* (Index: MDE 24/008/2013), issued on 14 March 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE24/008/2013/en>).

Name: Juwan Abd Rahman Khaled

Gender m/f: m

UA: 277/13 Index: MDE 24/055/2013 Issue Date: 4 October 2013