

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/syria-more-arrests-of-journalists-and-14-01-2012,41681.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Syria

Raids and arrests

## More arrests of journalists and bloggers despite Arab League observer presence

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Reporters Without Borders calls for the immediate release of the blogger and journalist [Mohamed Ghazi Kannass](#) and condemns his arrest on 3 January in Damascus despite the presence of Arab League observers in Syria.

Kannass was arrested by members of the security services as he was leaving his home in the Damascus suburb of Kafr Sousseh. It is not known where he is being held. Born in Saraqib, in the northern province of Idlib, he is a graduate of the communications faculty at Damascus University.

He was active on Facebook and kept his own blog, called [Kalemah Insan](#) ("A man's word"), in which he wrote many articles. He recently stopped posting "because of the current events in Syria."

Reporters Without Borders fears that the list of detained journalists and bloggers is getting longer, especially as it has just learned of a number of arrests of journalists dating back several months.

For example, **Hussein Issou**, a writer and activist, was arrested on 3 September in the northeastern city of Al-Hassakah. It was clear from his articles that he was taking a keen interest in the development of civil society in Syria. Reporters Without Borders is concerned about his health as he has heart problems for which he underwent an operation.

**Shabal Ibrahim**, an active member of the Union of Young Kurdish Coordinating Committees, was abducted by members of the security forces in the northeastern city of Qamishli on 22 September. His state of health is worrying as he has a liver ailment. Born in 1977, he graduated from a medical school but was never able to work as a doctor because of the file that the security services compiled on him.

The blogger **Othman Mohamed Issa** was arrested at his home in Midan, a southern suburb of the capital, at 9:30 a.m. on 21 November. His computer and mobile phone were seized.

**Ishar Kamal Al-Ahmad**, a journalist who worked for the Communist Party newspaper Al-Nour, was arrested on 1 August and was charged on 28 October of attacking the government's image and "disrupting the public order and the nation." He was subsequently convicted of coordinating and leading demonstrations, criticizing the government in online articles, disseminating anti-government leaflets, inciting a boycott, provoking the security forces and inciting sectarian hate.

He was finally released on 28 December pending another court hearing that is due to be held on 25 January. He had repeatedly been summoned for questioning by the security services since the start of the mass uprising last March. He used to post a lot of information on websites and created and edited "Free Youth Network," a very busy anti-government website from 2008 until last March, when the authorities closed it down because of its content.

Reporters Without Borders has learned that the following persons have been released:

- **Nizar Adleh**, a journalist who contributes to many websites. He had been held since 6

September.

- **Amer Matar**, a journalist with the daily *Al-Hayat* who was arrested on 4 September. This was his second arrest. He was previously arrested on 30 March and released on 14 April. Following his second arrest, he was transferred to Adraa prison at the start of December and was freed on 3 January.
- **Reem Ghazzi**, an actress, director and journalist who was arrested on 26 November and was transferred to Adraa prison at the start of December. She was freed on 8 January.

Here is non-exhaustive list of other journalists and bloggers who are currently detained:

- **Qais Abatili**, a very active netizen who was arrested on 25 September (<https://www.facebook.com/qaisabazli...>).
- **Nizar Al-Baba**, an online activist who has been held since 21 September.
- **Miraal Brouda**, a writer and poet who contributes to many websites.
- **Ahmed Bilal**, a producer for *Falesteen TV* who was arrested in the Damascus suburb of Mo'adamieh on 13 September.
- **Alwan Zouaiter**, a journalist who was written for many Lebanese dailies. He was arrested by intelligence officials in the northern city of Raqqah after returning from Libya. He was initially sentenced to five years in prison for allegedly contacting the Syrian opposition while abroad. The sentence was subsequently reduced to 13 months.
- **Omar Abdel Salam**
- **Abd Qabani**, a netizen arrested on 8 August.
- **Ammar Sa'ib**, a netizen arrested on 1 August in Damascus.
- **Abd Al-Majid Tamer**, a Kurdish freelance journalist working for Kurdish news websites who was arrested on 31 May in the northeastern city of Qamishli. He is reportedly still being held in Aleppo prison.
- **Manaf Al Zeitoun**, who was arrested on 25 March. There has been no news of him since his arrest.

The following two persons are also still detained:

- **Moheeb Al-Nawathy**, Palestinian journalist who had lived in Norway since 2007. He went missing on 5 January 2011, nine days after arriving in Damascus. He is a Fatah member and used to work for the website of the satellite TV station *Al-Arabiya*.
  - **Tal Al-Mallouhi**, a 19-year-old student and blogger who has been detained since December 2009. She was brought before a state security court in Damascus for the second time on 17 January 2011. Reportedly accused of spying for the United States, she is being held in solitary confinement in Duma prison, near Damascus. Internet users all over the world have been [calling for her release](#). She reportedly began a hunger strike on 26 December.
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