

# URGENT ACTION

## MEN IN VIDEO "CONFESSIONS" FEARED TORTURED

**Four Syrian men identified in televised "confessions" as involved in a plot to assassinate Syria's president have been held incommunicado for 10 weeks, during which time at least two of them are reported to have been tortured. Their lives are in grave danger.**

**Anas al-Husseini**, his cousin **Abd al-Ra'ouf "Jiwan" al-Husseini** and **Yaser "Abu Kurdu" Kurmi** were arrested at their homes in Damascus by members of State Security on 31 December 2012 and have since been detained incommunicado. Anas al-Husseini and Abd al-Ra'ouf "Jiwan" al-Husseini were, at least until three weeks ago (according to local sources) held at the al-Khatib branch of State Security in Damascus where these sources allege that both men were tortured and otherwise ill-treated, sometimes with electric shocks and knives. On 2 March Anas al-Husseini and a fourth man, **Mu'ayid al-Hashtar**, appeared in videos posted on pro-government websites "confessing" to involvement with the other two men in a plot to assassinate the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. There are fears that the men may have been coerced into making the "confessions", a common practice of Syria's security forces.

All four men are members of Syria's Kurdish minority. Anas al-Husseini and Abd al-Ra'ouf "Jiwan" al-Husseini worked in a cleaning company which, according to the "confessions", gave them access to government buildings. The alleged plot involved links with French, Turkish and US intelligence agencies but was said to be discovered by the Syrian authorities. If tried and convicted of involvement in such a plot, the men could face the death penalty.

Torture and other ill-treatment is rife in Syrian detention centres and prisons. Amnesty International has received the names of over 980 people reported to have died in custody since unrest broke out in March 2011. For more information, see Amnesty International's *'I wanted to die': Syria's torture survivors speak out*, 14 March 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>).

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

- Expressing concern that Anas al-Husseini, Abd al-Ra'ouf "Jiwan" al-Husseini, Yaser "Abu Kurdu" Kurmi and Mu'ayid al-Hashtar have been detained incommunicado without charge since their arrest on 31 December 2012, during which time at least two of them are reported to have been tortured;
- Urging the Syrian authorities to allow the men immediate access to visits from their family members, lawyers of their choosing, and any medical attention they may require;
- Reminding them that "confessions" obtained under duress must not be used as evidence in trials, and calling for the men to be released immediately and unconditionally unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 APRIL 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

His Excellency Major General Mohamad

Ibrahim al-Shaar, Ministry of Interior,  
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
Fax: +963 11 211 9578 (keep trying)

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Minister of Foreign Affairs

Walid al-Mu'allim

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 214 625 3 (keep trying)

**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

Many thousands of suspected opponents of the government have been arrested in Syria since largely peaceful protests calling for political reform began in February 2011 and many, if not most, are believed to have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

Since protests began, the situation has evolved into an internal armed conflict in much of the country, between the security forces and armed opposition groups intent on overthrowing the government. Systematic as well as widespread human rights abuses, including crimes against humanity and war crimes, have become rife, with civilians being the main victims. Amnesty International has documented numerous examples, most recently in documents such as *Syria: Indiscriminate attacks terrorize and displace civilians*, 19 September 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/078/2012/en>). Other bodies such as the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic have made similar findings. Amnesty International has called on all sides in the conflict to abide by international humanitarian law and protect civilians.

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.

Amnesty International is therefore continuing to call for the situation in Syria to be referred to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The organization is also calling for an international arms embargo aimed at halting the flow of weapons to the Syrian government, and an assets freeze on President Bashar al-Assad and his close associates. Additionally, states considering supplying weapons to the armed opposition should have in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure the material supplied is not used to commit human rights abuses or war crimes. The Syrian government should also allow the international independent Commission of Inquiry, and international human rights and humanitarian organizations, unfettered access to the country.

**Go to the interactive Eyes on Syria map, [www.eyesonsyria.org](http://www.eyesonsyria.org), to see where human rights violations are being committed in Syria, and Amnesty International's global activism to seek justice.**

Names: Anas al-Husseini, Abd al-Ra'ouf “Jiwan” al-Husseini, Yaser “Abu Kurdu” Kurmi, Mu'ayid al-Hashtar  
Gender m/f: m

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