

## URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

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**SYR 004 / 0311 / OBS 043.1**

Release

**Syrian Arab Republic**

March 25, 2011

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 on the following situation in **Syria**.

### **New information:**

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the release on March 24, 2011 of Mr. **Mazen Darwish**, Director of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM).

According to the information received, on March 24, 2011 in the evening Mr. Mazen Darwish was released without charge.

The Observatory welcomes the release of Mr. Mazen Darwish and thanks all the persons, institutions and organisations who intervened in his favour.

### **Background information:**

On March 23, 2011 at noon Mr. Mazen Darwish went at the political police headquarters in Almayyat in Damascus after being summoned by a high officer, who called him in the morning. No information could be obtained on Mr. Darwish's whereabouts until his release.

The Observatory recalls that on March 16, 2011 Mr. Mazen Darwish was among the activists arrested at the occasion of a peaceful rally before the Ministry of the Interior organised by human rights defenders and relatives of prisoners of conscience calling for their release<sup>1</sup>.

### **Actions requested:**

Please write to the Syrian authorities, urging them to:

i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Mazen Darwish;

ii. Order an immediate, thorough, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned facts, the result of which must be made public, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law;

iii. Put an end to any kind of harassment against all human rights defenders in Syria;

iv. 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";

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<sup>1</sup> See urgent appeals SYR 003 / 0311 / OBS 037 and SYR 003 / 0311 / OBS 037.1.

- its Article 5 (a), which states that “for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels to meet or assemble peacefully”;
- and its 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”;

v. 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.

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Paris-Geneva, March 25, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

E-mail: [Appeals@fidh-omct.org](mailto:Appeals@fidh-omct.org)

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