

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

SYR 012 / 0811 / OBS 109

Release

Syrian Arab Republic

August 24, 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), requests your urgent intervention on the following situation in **Syria**.

Description of the situation

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the release of Mr. **Abdel Karim Rihaoui**, President of the Syrian League for Human Rights.

According to the information received, on August 22, 2011, Mr. Abdel Karim Rihaoui was released without charge by the Syrian authorities, after eleven days in detention.

The Observatory recalls that Mr. Abdel Karim Rihaoui was arrested on August 11, 2011, by a patrol of the Air Intelligence, at the Havana Cafe in downtown Damascus, where he was meeting with a journalist¹.

The Observatory welcomes the release of Mr. Abdel Karim Rihaoui and thanks all the persons, institutions and organisations who intervened in his favour and recalls that despite this positive measure human rights defenders and their families continued to be harassed by the authorities on a daily basis in retaliation for their human rights activities carried out in the context of the national social protest movement and several remained in detention as to the date of publication of this appeal.

Actions requested:

Please write to the Syrian authorities, urging them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Abdel Karim Rihaoui;
- ii. Put an end to any kind of harassment against all human rights defenders in Syria as well as against their families;
- iii. 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";
 - 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";

¹ See The Observatory and Euromed Joint Press Release, August 12, 2011.

iv. 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, August 24, 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

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