

## URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

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**SYR 009 / 0611 / OBS 096**

Obstacle to the freedom of movement

**Syria**

June 28, 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 in the following situation in **Syria**.

### **Description of the situation:**

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the obstacle to the freedom of movement imposed on Mr. **Danial Saoud**, President of the Committees for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights (CDF).

According to the information received, Mr. Danial Saoud was prevented from leaving Syria and travelling to Cairo, Egypt, where he was invited to participate in an ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), organised from June 24 to 26, 2011. No motive justifying this travel ban was given to him by the authorities.

The Observatory recalls that in June 2009, Mr. Saoud was previously prevented from leaving Syria and travelling to Geneva, Switzerland, where he was supposed to take part in the Seminar organised by OMCT on how to address the economic, social and cultural root causes of violence through the UN Special Procedures System<sup>1</sup>.

The Observatory firmly condemns this restrictive measure imposed on Mr. Danial Saoud which merely seems at hindering his human rights activities and muzzling the freedom of expression.

The Observatory considers travel bans as an additional tool to silence Syrian human rights defenders preventing them from addressing regional and international fora about human rights violations committed in Syria, particularly in light of the current violent repression of peaceful protests in the country. The Observatory calls upon the Syrian authorities to put an end to the acts of harassment against Mr. Danial Saoud, and more generally against all human rights defenders in the country.

### **Actions requested:**

Please write to the Syrian authorities, urging them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Danial Saoud, as well as of all human rights defenders in Syria;
- ii. Put an end to any obstacle to his freedom of movement as well as of all human rights defenders in Syria, and ensure in all circumstances that Syrian human rights defenders are able to carry out their work without unjustified hindrances;
- iii. Comply with all the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in particular with its Article 1, which provides 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

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<sup>1</sup> See Observatory's Annual Report 2010.

levels”, its Article 5 (c), 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 national and international levels (...) to communicate with non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations”, its Article 6 (b) regarding the right “to freely publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms”, as well as with Article 12.2 “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”;

iii. 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. Tayzeer Qala Awwad, Ministry of Justice, 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 Bashar Ja'afari, 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.int
- Embassy of 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, June 28, 2011

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

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

- E-mail: [Appeals@fidh-omct.org](mailto:Appeals@fidh-omct.org)
- Tel and fax FIDH + 33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18 / +33 1 43 55 18 80
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