

## URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

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**SYR 013 / 1011 / OBS 117**

Incommunicado detention /  
Fear for physical integrity  
**Syria**

October 19, 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 continuing incommunicado detention of Mr. **Issam Zaghoul**, a lawyer who has denounced the deadly repression of the peaceful protest movement in Syria and the repression of lawyers.

According to the information received, in the night of August 23, 2011, Mr. Issam Zaghoul was arbitrarily arrested by members of the Air Force Intelligence Services at his home in Darya, Damascus. This arrest followed the participation of Mr. Issam Zaghoul in a silent sit-in of lawyers organised on the same day in front of the Syrian Bar Association to denounce its silence with respect to the deadly repression of the peaceful protest movement and the arrest of numerous lawyers in Syria since March 2011. Mr. Zaghoul also participated in various actions aimed at denouncing the repression.

Mr. Zaghoul has been detained incommunicado for nearly two months in the headquarters of the Air Force Intelligence Services in Damascus without access to his lawyer and family. No information has been given by the authorities about his condition nor the existence of charges against him. According to reliable sources, the health of Mr. Zaghoul would have seriously deteriorated over the past weeks. In addition, in the context of a widespread resort to torture and ill-treatment against activists, the Observatory seriously fears for the moral and physical integrity of Mr. Issam Zaghoul.

The Observatory strongly condemns the continued incommunicado detention of Mr. Zaghoul, as this measure seems to merely aim at punishing him for his human rights activities, and urges the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally.

### **Actions requested:**

Please write to the Syrian authorities urging them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Issam Zaghoul;
- ii. Release immediately and unconditionally Mr. Issam Zaghoul;
- iii. Put an end to any kind of harassment – including at the judicial level – against Mr. Issam Zaghoul as well as against all other individuals who monitor human rights violations;
- 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”,
  - its Article 6 (b) and (c), which states that “Everyone has the right, individually and in

association with others [...] as provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms and [...] to study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters”.

- 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. Tayzeer Qala Awwad, 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](mailto:mission.syria@ties.itu.int)
- 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, October 19, 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
- Tel and fax OMCT + 41 (0) 22 809 49 39 / + 41 22 809 49 29