

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/syria-wave-of-arrests-in-run-up-to-19-03-2012,42155.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Syria

Unending repression

## Wave of arrests in run-up to anniversary of uprising

19 March 2012

Many people, including journalists and bloggers, were arrested in the run-up to the 15 March anniversary of the Syrian uprising.

The lawyer and blogger **Rudy Othman** was among the new detainees. He was arrested on Hamra Street in Damascus on 15 March for the third time since the start of the protests. The blogger and activist **Jamal Al-Omas** was arrested at the Lebanese border the same day as he returned from Beirut.

The blogger **Mohamed Abu Hajar** was arrested in the Mediterranean-coast city of Tartus on 14 March because of what he has been writing in his blog "Mazaj."

**Ahmed Salal**, a journalist who was [arrested](#) on 12 February, was meanwhile released yesterday.

As [already reported](#), the 12 young people who were arrested on the evening of [7 March](#) in the restaurant Ninjar, in the Damascus neighbourhood of Bab Sharqi, included **Yara Michael Shamas**, 20, an information technology specialist who is the daughter of Michael Shamas, a human rights lawyer active on Facebook, [Jehad Jamal](#), a blogger known by the name of 'Milan', who had been [released](#) on 29 December after two and a half months in detention, and [Etab Labbad](#), a 20-year-old journalism student who has worked with various newspapers and websites such as *Kassioun* and *Baladna*.

The authorities are still holding eight of the 16 people who were arrested during a 16 February raid on the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. They are **Mazen Darwish** (the head of the centre), **Hussein Gharir**, **Hani Zitani**, **Joan Fersso**, **Bassam Al-Ahmed**, **Mansour Al-Omari**, **Abdel Rahman Hamada** and **Ayham Ghazzoul**. Reporters Without Borders reiterates its call for [their release](#). The latest member of the original 16 to be freed was **Shady Yazbek**, on 12 March.

There is still no news of two Turkish journalists – **Adem Özköse**, a reporter for the magazine *Gerçek Hayat* and the daily *Milat*, and cameraman **Hamit Coşkun** – who were [abducted](#) by Shabiha militiamen near the northwestern city of Idlib on 10 March and then handed over to members of the Syrian intelligence services.



Arabic version