

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/syria-free-syrian-army-faction-releases-14-11-2012,43676.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Syria

What about the other ?

## Free Syrian Army faction releases kidnapped Lebanese journalist

14 November 2012

[Read in Arabic \(بالعربية\)](#)

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that the Lebanese journalist **Fidaa Itani** was released on the night of 31 October, six days after being abducted by the Northern Storm Brigade, an armed group based in Aazaz, to the north of Aleppo, that is affiliated to the rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA).

"I was [kidnapped](#) on 25 October at Bab Al-Salami, a checkpoint between the Turkish border and the town of Aazaz," Itani told Reporters Without Borders. "I was taken blindfolded to an unknown location and put in a cell, where I remained for the duration of my captivity. So I was not placed under 'house arrest.'"

"Aside from being a captive and the poor quality of the food and water, I was treated acceptably. When I was interrogated, my abductors asked me many questions about my relations with the Assad regime and Hezbollah. I explained to them that in my work I have always been on good terms with the FSA. After six days, they finally released me near the Turkish border."

Here is the account he gave to LBCI: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Awb7...>

Reporters Without Borders points out that the FSA's code of conduct says it is supposed to ensure the safety and protection of civilians.. This includes journalists, both Syrian and foreign ones. The FSA high command must firmly and publicly condemn the abduction of journalists by its member organizations. Filmed [forced statements](#) must also be banned.

Four foreign journalists still held by their abductors:

- **Ankhar Kochneva**, a [Ukrainian journalist](#) who has worked for many Russian news media, especially as an interpreter, was kidnapped by an FSA faction on 9 October. She was able to confirm by telephone the same day that she had been taken hostage. And then, on 12 and 13 October, she was able to contact NTV, one of the Russian media she has worked for as an interpreter. A video was released on 8 November in which she asked the Ukrainian, Russian and Syrian authorities to agree to her captors' demands.
- **Cüneyt Ünal**, a cameraman working for US-funded *Al-Hurra TV*, was abducted in Aleppo on 20 August. He appeared in video [footage](#) broadcast by the Syrian pro-government TV station *Al-Ikhbariya* six days later that showed him looking tired and with bruises under both eyes. The Turkish humanitarian organization IHH posted a [photo](#) of him on its website on 27 October. It was dated 24 October and was obtained by an IHH delegation while visiting a detention centre.
- **Fahmi Al-Kadumi**, a Jordanian reporter working for *Al-Hurra*, also went missing in Aleppo on 20 August, at the same time as his colleague, Cüneyt Ünal. He was reportedly admitted to a hospital in Damascus for treatment to a shoulder injury and is now thought to be held by the Syrian authorities, although an information ministry communiqué on 4 September [denied this](#).

- **Austin Tice**, a US freelancer who worked for the *Washington Post*, *Al-Jazeera English* and *McClatchy*, went missing while reporting in a Damascus suburb on 13 August. A [video showing](#) him held by Jihadis was posted online on 26 September. The only sign of life since his disappearance, it gave no indication as to where he is currently being held, exactly who is holding him and what their demands are. His parents gave a news conference in Beirut on 12 November to request his release.

At least 23 professional journalists and 19 citizen-journalists are meanwhile currently being held in government prisons in Syria.

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