

URGENT ACTION

CHILD NOT PRESENTED TO COURT, LIFE AT RISK

Syrian 16-year-old Ahmed Ismael al-'Akkad should have been brought before a juvenile criminal court in mid-June, but was not presented to court. His whereabouts are unknown. He has been held incommunicado since 20 November 2012, when he was arrested.

Ahmed Ismael al-'Akkad was arrested during government raids on his neighbourhood, al-Midan, in the capital, Damascus. His family did not know where he had been taken but received a note from him about 40 days later, reportedly smuggled by released detainees, saying he was held at the Palestine branch, a Damascus detention centre run by Military Intelligence. The note also said his health was deteriorating as he was not receiving medication for his asthma and the prison was cramped and humid.

According to a local contact, Ahmed Ismael al-'Akkad was accused of supporting and having contact with "terrorists". An investigating judge from the Anti-Terrorism Court decided on 12 June 2013 to refer him to a juvenile criminal court in Damascus and he was expected to appear there within two days. Ahmed Ismael al-'Akkad has not yet appeared in court and although contacts believe that he may be held at the Military Intelligence branch in the Damascus suburb of Qaboun, his whereabouts have not been confirmed.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the Syrian authorities to reveal Ahmed Ismael al-Akkad's whereabouts, grant him immediate access to his family and lawyer, ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and give him any medical care he may require, including asthma medication ;
- Urging them to ensure that he is treated in accordance with human rights standards outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including principles for juvenile justice..

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 AUGUST 2013 TO:

President

Bashar al-Assad

Fax is the only reliable communication method. Please do not send letters

Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying; if voice answers, say "Fax")

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defence

Brigadier General Fahd Jassem al-Frej

Fax: +963 11 223 7842 (keep trying)

+963 11 666 2460 (keep trying)

(if voice answers, say "Fax")

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Walid al-Mu'allim

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

al-Rashid Street

Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

Fax: +963 11 214 6253 (keep trying)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Where appropriate, please also send copies to the Syrian and Russian diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 106/13. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/018/2011/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmed Ismael al-'Akkad is a resident of the predominantly Sunni Muslim neighbourhood of al-Midan in the capital, Damascus. According to a Syrian human rights organization, there was heavy fighting between Syrian government forces and armed opposition groups in the nearby neighbourhoods of al-Tadamon and al-Hajar al-Aswad, in the days leading up to Ahmed Ismael al-'Akkad's arrest. Al-Hajar al-Aswad was also shelled by government forces the day before he was arrested.

For an insight into the widespread torture and other ill-treatment in Syria's detention centres, please see *I wanted to die: Syria's torture survivors speak out*, (Index: MDE 24/016/2012, March 2012, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>)

Amnesty International has received the names of over 1,000 people believed to have died in the custody of the Syrian security forces since the beginning of the unrest – nearly 500 of them in 2012 alone. Amnesty International documented this practice in August 2011: *Deadly detention: Deaths in custody amid popular protest in Syria*, MDE 24/035/2011, (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/035/2011/en>).

Although the vast majority of the human rights abuses documented by Amnesty International have been committed by the state's armed forces and pro-government *shabiha* militias, abuses have also been committed by armed opposition groups. This includes the torture and killing of captured members of the security forces and *shabiha* militia members as well as the abduction and killing of people known or suspected to support or work with the government and its forces, or the taking of civilians as hostages to try to negotiate prisoner swaps. Amnesty International condemns without reservation such abuses and has called on the leadership of all armed opposition groups in Syria to state publicly that such acts are prohibited and to do all in their power to ensure that opposition forces put an immediate stop to them. See *Syria: Summary killings and other abuses by armed opposition groups*, Index: MDE 24/008/2013), 14 March 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE24/008/2013/en/8d527c4e-2aff-4311-bad8-d63dbc97c96a/mde240082013en.html>.

Please send copies of your appeals to the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations: His Excellency Bashar Ja'afari, PhD, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, 820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017, Fax: +1212 983 4439 E-mail: exesec.syria@gmail.com

Name: Ahmed Ismael al-'Akkad
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 106/13 Index: MDE 24/036/2013 Issue Date: 11 July 2013