

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN WOMAN ARRESTED, LIFE AT RISK

Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteer Maryam Haid was arrested on 13 January in Damascus. She was later shown “confessing” on a programme on a pro-government TV channel. She has been held in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance and her life may be in danger.

According to a relative living overseas, **Maryam Haid** was arrested on 13 January by men believed to be members of the Syrian Criminal Security forces, who raided her apartment in the capital, Damascus. They were apparently looking for her cousin, with whom she shares an apartment. Two other people sharing the apartment were also arrested, though one of them was released later that day. According to people who were held with her and subsequently released, Maryam Haid was initially detained at a Criminal Security branch in Damascus but it is not known where she is held now. Her family have not heard from her since her arrest and a lawyer who has contacted officials inside the security forces about her case has also been unable to obtain information about her fate and whereabouts.

It is unclear why she was arrested, but the relative living overseas believes it may be in connection with the activities of her cousin, who was detained for some six months in 2013 after participating in anti-government demonstrations, or those of other relatives, some of whom have been involved in political or human rights activism. Maryam Haid is volunteering with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in psychosocial support projects but is not known to be a political activist. The next time Maryam Haid's family saw her was on 5 March when she appeared on *al-'Ayn al-Sahera* (The watchful eye), a programme shown on the pro-government Syrian Satellite Channel, where she was presented as a “terrorist” before “confessing” to organizing demonstrations, contacting journalists and receiving money and equipment from them. She may have been coerced into making the “confessions”, a common practice by Syria's security forces, and this would heighten concern for her safety. She has not been seen or heard from since then.

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

- Urging the authorities to reveal Maryam Haid's whereabouts without delay, and give her immediate access to her family, lawyer and any medical attention she may require;
- Urging them to ensure that Maryam Haid is protected from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Reminding them that “confessions” obtained under duress must not be used as evidence in trials, and calling on them to release Maryam Haid unless she is to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 APRIL 2014 TO:

President

Bashar al-Assad

Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)

(If voice answers, say “Fax”. Fax is the only reliable communication method; please do not send letters)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Major General Mohamad Ibrahim al-Shaar

Fax: +963 11 311 0554

(If voice answers, say “Fax”. Fax is the only reliable communication method; please do not send letters)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Permanent Representative to the UN

Bashar Ja'afari

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017

Fax: +1 212 983 4439

E-mail: exeexec.syria@gmail.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

Where appropriate, please also send copies to the Syrian and Russian diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The video of Maryam Haid is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMeRgVZThqs>. Two men featured in the same programme “confess” to, among other things, being in contact with news channels such as Sky News, filming operations of armed opposition groups, meeting with members of such groups and propagating stories of clashes between government and opposition forces in exchange for money and drugs.

For an insight into the widespread torture and other ill-treatment in Syria's detention centres, see *I wanted to die: Syria's torture survivors speak out* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/016/2012/en>). Thousands are reported to have died in the custody of the Syrian security forces since unrest began in 2011. Amnesty International documented this practice in the report *Deadly detention: Deaths in custody amid popular protest in Syria* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/035/2011/en>).

While most of the abuses have been committed by government forces, serious human rights abuses, including war crimes, have been committed by armed opposition groups, including some affiliated to al-Qa'ida and some affiliated to the Free Syrian Army, and these have escalated in recent months. Armed opposition groups have increasingly resorted to summary killings of members of the various government security forces, pro-government militias, suspected informers or collaborators, members of rival armed opposition groups and members of minority communities perceived by members of armed opposition groups as loyal to President Bashar al-Assad such as Shi'a or Alawite Muslims. Armed opposition groups have also carried out indiscriminate attacks leading to civilian casualties, used children in hostilities, tortured or otherwise ill-treated captives, issued sectarian threats and carried out attacks against minority communities perceived as pro-government, and abducted and held hostages. See *Syria: Summary killings and other abuses by armed opposition groups*, issued on 14 March 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE24/008/2013/en>) and *Syria: Rule of fear: ISIS abuses in detention in Northern Syria*, issued on 19 December 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/063/2013/en>).

Name: Maryam Haid

Gender m/f: f

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