

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST MOVED FROM PRISON, RISKS TORTURE

Peaceful activist Bassel Khartabil has been moved to an unknown location from 'Adra prison, where he had been held since December 2012. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Bassel Khartabil was moved to an unknown location on 3 October, from 'Adra prison, where he had been held since December 2012. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. He had been arrested on 15 March 2012 by Syrian Military Intelligence agents in the al-Mezzeh area of Damascus. He was detained by Military Intelligence incommunicado and without his family being informed of his whereabouts until November 2012, when he was transferred to 'Adra prison and from there to a Military Field Court and then Saydnaya military prison on 9 December 2012. He later said that his questioning before the Military Field Court took roughly one minute and he was not told its conclusion. When he was returned to 'Adra prison in late December 2012, he said that he had been tortured and otherwise ill-treated while detained at Saydnaya military prison.

It is not known why Bassel Khartabil was arrested, but it is likely to have been because of his activities as a peaceful activist and advocate for the right to freedom of expression. He had worked as a software engineer until he was arrested, specializing in open-source software development.

Bassel Khartabil was able to tell his family on 3 October that he had been told to collect his belongings as he would be transferred, but was not told where he would be taken. His family fear that he has been moved to the al-Qaboun Branch of the Military Police to be brought before a Military Field Court again. Torture and other ill-treatment are rife in these facilities and proceedings before Military Field Courts are grossly unfair.

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

- Expressing concern that Bassel Khartabil has been detained incommunicado at an unknown location since 3 October, and urging the Syrian authorities to grant him immediate access to his family, a lawyer of his choice, and any medical attention he may require;
- Calling on them to release Bassel Khartabil if he has been detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that Bassel Khartabil is protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

Permanent Representative to the UN

Bashar Ja'afari, Ambassador
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
820 Second Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
Fax: +1 212 983 4439
E-mail: exesec.syria@gmail.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

Bashar al-Assad
Fax: +963 11 332 3410 (keep trying)
(If fax does not go through, please
include your message to the president in
an email to the Ambassador, asking for it
to be forwarded)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defence

General Fahd Jassem al-Freij
Fax: +963 11 223 7842 (keep trying)
+963 11 666 2460 (keep trying)
(If fax does not go through, please
include your message to the Minister of
Defence in an email to the Ambassador,
asking for it to be forwarded)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to 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

Bassel Khartabil is a Palestinian, resident in Syria, and has received international recognition for his work in software engineering and peaceful activism. The magazine *Foreign Policy* named him in its list of the Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2012. Though he was arrested just weeks before his wedding was due to take place, he was able to marry his fiancée in 'Adra prison on 7 January 2013.

He was previously the subject of UA 264/12 and updates (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/091/2012/en/>).

There are particular concerns for Bassel Khartabil as proceedings before Military Field Courts are grossly unfair. Defendants there have no legal representation and scant opportunities to defend themselves. The courts' decisions are binding and not subject to appeal. Military Field Courts can hand down death sentences.

For additional information on Bassel Khartabil's case, please see the September issue of *Syria: Voices in Crisis* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/2561/2015/en/>).

You may also wish to send the following tweets:

#disappeared since 3 October @Presidency_Sy where is Bassel khartabil? #syria #freebassel
@Presidency_Sy whereabouts of Bassel Khartabil must be made known #syria #freebassel

Name: Bassel Khartabil

Gender m/f: m

UA: 220/15 Index: MDE 24/26 Issue Date: 7 October 2015