

# Human Rights Commissioner criticizes torture of children and teenagers in Syria

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31.05.2011 - Press release 

Following the broadcast by Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya of a video showing the signs of brutal torture on the corpse of 13-year-old Hamza al-Khatib, thousands of people took part in demonstrations of solidarity in 20 Syrian cities at the weekend. Some of these demonstrations were broken up by force.

Markus Löning, the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office, issued the following statement on the matter today (31 May):

“I am shocked by the sheer brutality and the scale of the repression carried out by the Syrian Government. Obviously the Government has no qualms even when it comes to the maltreatment of minors.

I extend my heartfelt sympathy to the family of Hamza al-Khatib.

I call upon the Syrian leadership to stop the violence against the civilian population immediately. Torturing prisoners, especially minors, cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

The Syrian people’s right to express their opinions and demonstrate freely has to be respected. All political prisoners must be released without delay. President Assad needs to initiate a political process that brings together all stakeholders.”

In view of the ongoing violence, the Syrian ambassador to Germany was summoned to the Federal Foreign Office again today.

According to human rights groups, over 1000 people have been killed by security forces in Syria since the protests started in March. Over 9000 have been imprisoned.

[Overview "Newsroom"](#)

