

# Human Rights Commissioner condemns violence and human rights abuses in Syria

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12.10.2012 - Press release 

Markus Löning, the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy, issued the following statement today (12 October) in response to the arrest of Syrian human rights activist Khalil Maatouk:

President Bashar al-Assad's regime is now clinging to power only by violence, torture, intimidation and persecution. These methods include the arrest and enforced disappearance of important opposition activists. Khalil Maatouk is one; his fellow human rights activist Mazen Darwish is another.

A humanitarian situation badly affected by the violence is about to be compounded by the coming winter weather. This is a cause of great concern!

I call on the Syrian Government to release all political prisoners without delay. There has to be an immediate end to torture, repression and the bombardment of entire neighbourhoods.

The duty of the state is to protect its citizens, not repress them, kill them, or leave them without protection from the elements.

Human rights campaigner Khalil Maatouk was abducted on 2 October 2012. He suffers from a lung condition and is in urgent need of medical care. His family have received no news of him since he disappeared.

Mazen Darwish, head of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression in Damascus, has been in custody since February. He is to be tried by a military tribunal. It is highly unlikely that he will be afforded a fair trial.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)), the number of Syrians having fled to neighbouring countries to escape the war has more than trebled in the last three months. More than 311,000 Syrian refugees are being looked after in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and

Iraq. The UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) is predicting that at least 710,000 refugees outside Syria will be needing emergency assistance by the end of 2012.

Overview "Newsroom"