



Date : Monday 9 November 2009

## **88 Arab lawyers express solidarity with Syrian human rights lawyer Mohanad Al Hassani**

**Eighty-eight lawyers express their strong concern in relation to the fate of Mr. Al Hassani, a human rights lawyer, President of the Syrian Organization for Human Rights "Sawasiya" and member of the Damascus Bar Association for 15 years.**

<http://www.fidh.org/88-Arab-lawyers-express-solidarity-with-Syrian>

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**FIDH - Worldwide Human Rights Movement**

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November 9, 2009

To the attention of: Mr. Nizar Assakkef, President of the Syrian Bar Association Mr. Mohammad Jihad Al-Lahham, President of the Damascus section of the Syrian Bar Association

Dear Sirs,

We have been informed that the Disciplinary Board of the Bar Association of Damascus has been examining since August, 11, 2009 a case concerning Mr. **Mohanad Al Hassani** and might issue its ruling on November 10, 2009.

As lawyers, we wish to share our strong concern in relation to the fate of Mr. Al Hassani, a human rights lawyer, President of the Syrian Organization for Human Rights "Sawasiya" and member of the Damascus Bar Association for 15 years.

Mr. Al Hassani is accused of having failed to request the President of the Bar Association's authorisation to create the above-mentioned human rights organisation, of having attended hearings before the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) within the framework of his judicial observation activities related to the respect of international standards on fair trial in the absence of any authorisation, and of having expressed slanderous comments undermining the image of the State.

We are aware that Mr. Al-Hassani is also facing criminal charges brought against him by an investigating judge at the end of July for allegedly "weakening national sentiment" and "spreading false information that could debilitate the morale of the nation and harm the reputation of the state abroad".

Such charges have been frequently used by the judiciary to target human rights defenders and political dissidents, and we consider them politically motivated. The fact that the Bar Association's referral of the case of Mr. Al-Hassani to its disciplinary board occurred within a week and was based on similar grounds is therefore of particular concern to us.

These two proceedings, in themselves, appear to contravene international standards relating to the independence of lawyers and the role of human rights defenders, including as contained in the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998 and to the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers adopted in September 1990. Article 16 of the Basic Principles provides that lawyers must be "able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference" and that they "shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties".

The role of the Bar Association is to defend the role of lawyers in the society, in particular in their capacity as human rights defenders, and to promote debates on the law and its implementation.

Without intending to interfere with the competencies or independence of the Syrian Bar Association we wish to share with you our strong concerns and urge you to drop all accusations against Mr. Al Hassani, as they manifestly aim at obstructing his human rights activities and his right to freedom of expression and association.

We hope that you will take this request into consideration.

Sincerely,

1. Mr. Hafez ABU SAADA, Lawyer and General Secretary of the Egyptian Organization For Human Rights (EOHR), Egypt
2. Mr. Mokhtar TRIFI, Lawyer and President of the Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH), Tunisia
3. Mr. Mostefa BOUCHACHI, Lawyer and President of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LADDH), Algeria
4. Mr. Abchi MOHSEN, Lawyer at the Tripoli Bar Association, Lebanon
5. Mr. Abdelaziz NOUAYDI, Lawyer and President of Adala, Morocco
6. Mr. Houcine BARDI, Lawyer at the Paris Bar, France
7. Mr. Hassan SEMLALI, Lawyer at the Kenibra Bar, Morocco
8. Mr. Sofiane CHOUITER, Lawyer, Algeria
9. Mr. Amine SIDHOUM, Lawyer and human rights defender, Algeria
10. Mr. Anouar KOUSRI, Lawyer before the Cassation Court, Tunisia
11. Mr. Zarad Al- Sayed, Lawyer and member of the Mousawa Center for Human Rights, Egypt
12. Mr. Ahmed Dorgam, Lawyer and member of the Mousawa Center for Human Rights, Egypt
13. Mr. Hanim Elbaz, Lawyer and member of the Mousawa Center for Human Rights, Egypt
14. Mr. Ahmed Abo Msalam, Lawyer and member of the Mousawa Center for Human Rights, Egypt
15. Mr. Rimaz Zarad, Lawyer and member of the Mousawa Center for Human Rights, Egypt
16. Mr. Mohamed Bayoumi, Egyptian Lawyer and Executive Director for Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights (EFRR)
17. Mr. Ahmed Badawy, Egyptian Lawyer and EFRR Chairman
18. Dr. Martin David Jones, Canadian Lawyer and Vice Chairman for EFRR

19. Mr. Mohamed Ahmed, Lawyer, Bahrain
20. Mr. Mohamed Al Tajer, Lawyer, Bahrain
21. Mr. Mohammed Al Jishi, Lawyer, Bahrain
22. Mr. Mohamed Amarti, Lawyer and member of the Moroccan Organisation for Human Rights (Organisation marocaine des droits humains - OMDH)
23. Mr. Mohamed Abdel Monem, Lawyer and member of the Association for Human Rights Legal Aid (AHRLA), Egypt
24. Ms. Kahina Azdaou, Lawyer, Algeria
25. Mr. Abdesattar Ben Moussa, Lawyer and former President of the Bar Council of Tunisia
26. Mr. Abderazak KILANI, Lawyer and President of the Tunis Branch of the Bar Council, Tunisia
27. Ms. Radia Nasraoui, Lawyer, former member of the Bar Council and President of the Tunisian Association Against Torture (Association tunisienne de lutte contre la torture), Tunisia
28. Mr. Abderaouf Ayadi, Lawyer, former member member of the Bar Council and former secretary general of the National Council for Freedoms in Tunisia (Conseil national des pour les libertés en Tunisie - CNLT), Tunisia
29. Mr. Ayachi Hammami, Lawyer, Tunisia
30. Mr. Mohammed Abbou, Lawyer, Tunisia
31. Mr. Faouzi Ben Mrad, Lawyer and former member of the Association of the Young Lawyers in Tunisia (Jeunes Avocats de Tunisie)
32. Ms. Amel Abada, Lawyer, militant and member of the Algerian league for defense of human rights (Ligue algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'Homme - LADDH)
33. Ms. Maya Mansour, Lawyer, member of the Beirut Bar Association and lecturer at the university, Lebanon
34. Mr. Nizar Saghie, Lawyer at the Beirut Bar Association (Lebanon)
35. Mr Karim NATOURI, Lawyer and President of the Bejaia branch of the LADDH, Algeria
36. Ms. Zaha al Majali, Lawyer and member of Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies, Jordan

37. Mr. Aissa RAHMOUNE, Lawyer and President of "oumouhand amrane" office, LADDH of Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria
38. Mr. Abdelhamid REHIOUI, Lawyer at the Bar of Constantine a,d President of the Constantine Branch of the LADDH, Algeria
39. Mr. Mohammed Naji Saleh Alaw, Lawyer, Yemen
40. Mr. Abdulkarim Alkhawani, Lawyer, Yemen 41. Mr. Bechir ESSID, President of the Bar Association of Tunisia
42. Mr. Ibrahim Bouderbala, Lawyer and former president of the Tunis Branch of Lawyers, Tunisia
43. Mr. Khaled Krichi, Lawyer and member of the Tunisian Association of Young Lawyers, Tunisia
44. Mr. Chokri Belaid, Lawyer, Tunisia
45. Mr. Jalel Hammami, Lawyer, Tunisia
46. Mr. Amor Satraoui, Lawyer, Tunisia
47. Mr. Reda Bel Haj, Lawyer, Tunisia
48. Mr. Slah Ourimi, Lawyer, Tunisia
49. Mr. Bassam Trifi, Lawyer, Tunisia
50. Mr. Gamal Eid, Lawyer , Executive Director of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information - Egypt
51. Mr.Emad Mubarak, Lawyer and Executive Director of the Foundation for Freedom of thought and expression, Egypt
52. Mr. Improved Bahnasi, Lawyer, Legal Aid Society for Human Rights, Egypt
53. Mr.Mohammad Zarea, Lawyer and Director of the Arab Organization for Penal Reform, Egypt
54. Mr.Nasser Amin, Lawyer and Director of the Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and Lawyers, Egypt
55. Mr.Negad Albourae, Lawyer before the cassation court and Director of the Legal Unit of the United Group, Egypt
56. Ms. Inas Ismail Hussein, Lawyer and member of the United Group ,Egypt
57. Ms. Sarah Hisham, Lawyer and member of the United Group, Egypt

58. Mr. Abdul Hamid Salim Abdul-Hamid, Lawyer and member of the United Group, Egypt
59. Mr. Karim Ahmadinejad, Lawyer and member of the United Group, Egypt
60. Mr. Muhammad Ali, Lawyer and member of the United Group, Egypt
61. Mr. Yasser Shook, Lawyer and member of the United Group, Egypt
62. Ms. Rawda Ahmed Sayed, Lawyer and member of the Arabic Network for Human Rights, Egypt
63. Mr. Najah Wakim, Lawyer and former member of Parliament, Chairman of the People's Party, Lebanon
64. Mr. Radwan Seydou, Lawyer, Syria
65. Mr. Ethene Mahmoud, Lawyer, Syria
66. Mr. Sulaiman Ismail, Lawyer, Syria
67. Mr. Masood Caso, Lawyer, Syria
68. Mr. Mustafa Owusu, Lawyer, Syria
69. Mr. Abdullah Khalil, Lawyer, Syria
70. Mr. Abdallah Imam, Lawyer, Syria
71. Mr. Hassan Abdel-Azim, Lawyer, Syria
72. Mr. Habib Issa, Lawyer, Syria
73. Mr. Mahmoud Marei, Lawyer, Syria
74. Mr. Samer Al-Huwaidi, Lawyer, Syria
75. Mr. Ali Fares, Lawyer, Syria
76. Ms. Daad Moses, Lawyer, Syria
77. Ms. Razan Zaytoon, Lawyer, Syria
78. Ms. Catherine Tally, Lawyer, Syria

79. Mr. Radeef Mustafa, Lawyer, Syria

80. Mr. Abdul Razak Zureik, Lawyer, Syria

81. Mr. Burgess El Fna, Lawyer, Syria

82. Mr. Nazem Al Hammadi, Lawyer, Syria

83. Mr. Tayseer Kardas, Lawyer, Syria

84. Mr. Hussein Issa, Lawyer, Syria

85. Mr. Nasr-Eddine Lezzar, Lawyer and human rights defender, Algeria

86. Mr. Wadie Meraghni, Lawyer and member of the LADDH, Algeria

87. Mr. Siham Hammache, Lawyer and member of the Algiers Bar, Algeria

88. Mr. Raji Sourani, Lawyer, Palestine