

Relatives of activists targeted in retaliation International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) 1 September 2011 The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), and the Euromediterranean Federation against enforced disappearances (FEMED) strongly condemn the Syrian authorities for intensifying arbitrary arrests and systematic acts of harassment against human rights defenders as well as pro-democracy activists and members of their families.

(...) “This arrest is a new illustration of the systematic campaign of repression led by the Syrian authorities against all dissenting voices and human rights defenders”, stated Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President. “The Syrian authorities should immediately stop the targeting of relatives of human rights defenders. Clearly this is done to intimidate them or to force them to surrender.”

“Again the authorities demonstrate the little consideration they have for the respect of basic human rights standards. This calls for a strong condemnation by the international community”, said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President. (...)

“Targeting family member brings us back to the Middle Ages”, said Gerald Staberock, OMCT Secretary General. “The fact that these events come only days after the UN Human Rights Council had condemned Syria for its human rights violations following the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights shows the defiance to the human rights system. We need urgently an end to such violations. And we need international accountability for those responsible for such atrocious acts”, he added.

The EMHRN, the Observatory and the FEMED urge the Syrian authorities to put an end to all acts of harassment against human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists to immediately and unconditionally release all persons arbitrarily detained and to conform in all circumstances with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998) as well as international human rights instruments, which bind the Syrian authorities. **Read the full [article](#) .**