

Syria: Comply With Agreement Human Rights Watch 6 January 2012 (...) The Arab League should declare that if Syria fails to take the repression-ending measures it agreed to and continues to impede the monitoring mission, the League will urge the United Nations Security Council to impose an arms embargo on Syria and sanctions against the individuals responsible for grave violations. (...)

(...) In the agreement it signed with the Arab League on December 19 the Syrian government pledged to end violence against peaceful protests, release detained protesters, withdraw armed elements from cities and residential areas, and allow Arab and international media unhindered access to all parts of Syria. Syria also pledged in the agreement to grant Arab League monitors unhindered and independent access to all individuals they wish to interview to verify Syria's implementation of these measures, including victims, detainees, and nongovernmental organizations. Syria guaranteed the safety of witnesses from reprisals.

According to Arab League Secretary General Nabil Elaraby, Syria has already taken some steps under the terms of the agreement, withdrawing heavy weapons from Syrian cities, and releasing about 3,500 prisoners.

But Human Rights Watch has found that Syria has yet to honor most of its commitments under its agreement with the Arab League. Attacks by security forces against peaceful protests have been reported every day since the Arab League mission began. (...)

(...) Reports indicate that since the Syrian government signed the Arab League agreement, it has arbitrarily detained activists, including Mohamed Anwar al-Dabas, the brother-in-law of Ghiyath Matar, an activist whose death in detention Human Rights Watch reported in September.

Human Rights Watch [has documented what seem to be efforts by the Syrian government to deceive the Arab League monitors](#). Under the agreement, Syria agreed to provide the monitors full access to prisons, detention centers, police stations, and hospitals. However, authorities transferred hundreds of detainees to improvised holding centers at military sites in an apparent effort to hide them from the monitors. Foreign Minister Walid Moallem was quoted in the Independent daily of London on December 21 saying that the international monitors would not be permitted to visit certain "sensitive" military locations.

Authorities have also issued police identification cards to military officials apparently in order to give the impression that military forces have, under the agreement with the Arab League, withdrawn from civilian areas.

Syria also appears to be violating its pledge under the agreement to protect people who communicate with the monitors from reprisal. (...)

The Arab League should investigate credible reports of reprisals against Syrians who communicate with its monitors and take its own measures to protect those it interviews, including refusing to allow Syrian government agents to monitor interviews, establishing information security systems to protect the confidentiality of information provided by victims and

witnesses who request it, and denouncing any reprisals publicly.

Human Rights Watch urged the Arab League to enhance its monitoring mission by deploying monitors who have expertise in human rights and in forensic investigations, and by seeking technical support for the mission from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (...)

(...) Human Rights Watch urged the Arab League to disclose the criteria used to select monitors participating in its mission and to make the monitoring reports public in order to bolster the transparency and accountability of the mission. (...)

See full [statement](#) .