

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED KURDISH ACTIVIST IN CRITICAL HEALTH

The health of **Suleiman Abdulmajid Oussou** has critically deteriorated since 21 June. The Syrian Kurdish opposition activist has been arbitrarily detained by the Asayish, the police force of the Democratic Union Party (PYD)-led Autonomous Administration, in the north-eastern region of Syrian, since 23 May. He is currently held in poor conditions in Allaya prison in Qamishli, north-eastern Syria, without being charged.

Suleiman Abdulmajid Oussou, 58 years old and father of six, underwent a heart stenting procedure before he was arrested. On 12 June, Suleiman Oussou's family visited him in Allaya prison for the first time and provided him with crucial blood pressure medication. According to the relative, Suleiman Oussou was then denied family visits until 22 June. On that day, his family visited him again, only to find out that his health condition has significantly deteriorated to the extent that he could barely stand on his feet. A relative told Amnesty International: "The prison authorities informed us that his health had deteriorated the day before, and that he had to be taken to the Rahma hospital in Qamishli, then transferred back to the prison on the same night".

Suleiman Oussou is being held in poor detention conditions in a communal cell with more than ten other detainees. The relative added that he is struggling to cope with the high temperatures inside the cell. This is due to the lack of proper ventilation system and insufficient food provision. These conditions are further affecting his critical health condition, while he is being denied access to medication and proper health care.

Suleiman Oussou was initially arrested by the Asayish forces from his house in the city of Qamishli on 23 May. He is a member of the foreign affairs bureau of the Kurdish National Council in Syria (ENKS), and member of the political bureau of the Kurdish Yekiti Party in Syria (PYKS). According to a close family member, the whereabouts of Suleiman Oussou remained unknown for twenty days after his arrest, until his family received a phone call from the Asayish informing them that Suleiman Oussou is being detained in Allaya prison in Qamishli. Suleiman Oussou confirmed to his relatives that he hasn't been formally charged with any offences and had not had access to lawyers until now.

The relative added: "Every minute counts, Suleiman Oussou's health is in danger and it keeps deteriorating in detention. He needs immediate medical care".

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the Asayish forces to release Suleiman Abdulmajid Oussou immediately or charge him with a recognizable offence, in line with international law and standards;
- Urging them to ensure that pending his release, he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, granted regular access to his family and lawyers, and any medical treatment he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 AUGUST 2017 TO:

Head of Asayish

Mr Ciwan Ibrahim

Email: asayisraghandin@gmail.com

Twitter: @ciwanbrahim

Salutation: Mr.

Co-president of the Democratic Union

Party (PYD)

Salih Maslem Mohamed

Twitter: @serokepyd

Salutation: Mr.

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. There is no Syrian Embassy in the UK – it has been closed.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Suleiman Oussou had been formerly detained three times by the Syrian government for his political activism in 1992, 2008 and 2009 respectively. On 17 November 2016, he was arrested by the Asayish forces and detained for a week, alongside other members of the PYKS, for re-opening the PYKS offices in Amuda in Qamishli, following the closure of the offices by the Asayish on 16 November 2016. He was released after a week.

The arbitrary detention of Suleiman Oussou is believed to be part of a calculated campaign of arrests of political activists and others by the Asayish across the area controlled by the PYD-led Autonomous Administration, commonly referred to as Rojava. Since 14 March, the Asayish have arbitrarily arrested and detained numerous members and supporters of Kurdish opposition parties in Qamishli and in more than nine cities across Rojava.

On 9 May, the Asayish arrested 13 leading members of the ENKS: Fasla Youssef, Narin Matini, Mahmud Malla, Mohsen Taher, Abdelsamad Khalaf Biro, Fathi Gaddo, Ahmed Ajeh, Mahmoud Haj Ali, Farhad Tami, Mohamed Amin Hossam, Noreldin Fattah, Taher Hassaf, and Qassem Sherif. These arrests happened as a result of ENKS continuing work following the closure of their offices by the Asayish on 2 May for operating an “unlicensed” organisation. Mohsen Taher and Amin Hossam remain in arbitrary detention at Allaya prison until now.

On 10 May, the Asayish forces arrested Mohamed Sido Ben Hassan in Afrin, an 80-year-old supporter of the ENKS. Mohamed Sido Ben Hassan was detained for 14 days, then put on public trial in his village Bilan, during which he died of a cardiac arrest.

On 20 May, Bashar Amin, 70 years old, member of the ENKS and the political bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS), was also arrested by the Asayish from his own home, after holding a press conference at the ENKS office during which he criticized the repressive practices of the Asayish against political activists. Bashar Amin remains in arbitrary detention at Allaya prison until now.

On 23 May, the Asayish forces arrested four additional members of the ENKS: Suleiman Oussou, Fouad Ibrahim, Nafeh Abdullah and Barzan Hussein who works as a reporter at Ark TV. All four remain in arbitrary detention at Allaya prison until now.

In 2014, the PYD along with a number of smaller political parties established an autonomous administration in three primarily Kurdish cantons in northern Syria: Afrin, Jazira (in Hasakeh governorate) and Ain al-Arab (Kobani). The PYD-led Administration has its own police force, courts, prisons, ministries and laws. The PYD also formed an army, the People's Protection Unit (YPG), primarily responsible for protecting Kurdish held territory and for running military courts.

In August 2015, Amnesty International visited two central prisons under the control of the Asayish, in Qamishli and Malikiya. Amnesty International researchers documented the arbitrary detention of critics and others believed to be sympathizers or members of the armed group calling itself the Islamic State. Some people had been arbitrarily detained for periods up to a year without charge or trial. Those who did face trials were held in lengthy pre-trial detention and proceedings were blatantly unfair.