

Press Release

Freedom for Razan Ghazzawi and the Syrian people

Friday 9 December 2011, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 8 December 2011).

Egyptian, international advocates call for jailed Syrian activist's release.

Syrian authorities' arrest of Razan Ghazzawi, a feminist, human rights activist, and blogger, shows the scope of their continuing and brutal crackdown on dissent, a coalition of 170 Egyptian, Arab and international human rights advocates said in a statement released today. The organizations and individuals are calling for the immediate release of Ghazzawi and all the other political prisoners in Syria, and affirm the support of democratic and progressive activists across the Arab world for the Syrian people's brave struggle for dignity and freedom.□□

Ghazzawi was arrested by Syrian police on December 4 at the Jordanian-Syrian border. Ironically, she was traveling to Amman, Jordan, to attend a conference on media freedom in the Arab world. Ghazzawi was representing the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, for which she works as a coordinator. She has been jailed since then with only extremely brief telephone contact with her family. Friends and supporters express grave concern for her safety and well-being, given the Assad regime's record of torturing dissidents, particularly since the start of the revolution in Syria this year.

□□"The Syrian government's attempts to curtail the freedoms and muzzle the mouths of those like Razan who defend their rights is the biggest evidence of the fragility of the regime and its failure," said Ramy Raoof, Egyptian blogger and human rights activist. "The increasing violence and repression strengthen the courage of human rights defenders, who continue to struggle for rights and freedoms, and to expose violations."□□Ghazzawi has blogged on human rights and related issues since 2009. Since the Syrian revolution began in February 2011, she has drawn attention to the regime's abuses, including the persecution of political dissidents. She has also spoken out on women's issues, and on behalf of ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. She is one of the few Syrian bloggers to publish under her own full name. Although she holds a US as well as Syrian passport, and could have carried on her work from abroad, she deliberately chose to remain in Syria in solidarity with her comrades in the struggle.

"We cannot stay silent while we are watching continued repression against women human rights defenders in our Arab countries," said Yara Sallam, Egyptian activist and the manager of the Women Human Rights Defenders Program (Nazra for Feminist Studies). "This cannot be tolerated. We will remain in this struggle against all the repressive governments no matter how long it will take, and we will not forget the prisoners of conscience nor will we forgive the violations committed against us,"□□

The United Nations estimates that over 4,000 people have been killed by the Syrian government in its crackdown on the revolution in 2011. Uncounted numbers of opposition figures and protesters

have been subjected to arbitrary arrest and torture.□□

Ahmad Ragheb, Executive Director of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center, Egypt, said: "Undoubtedly Razan Ghazzawi is not the only one arrested by the Syrian authorities.

She's one of hundreds of activists against whom the Syrian regime has perpetrated repression and abuse over the past months. Arresting Razan is nothing but another desperate attempt by the regime to silence voices trying to expose the inhumane crimes committed against the rights of the Syrian people since the beginning of the revolution. We do not just demand the release of "Razan Ghazzawi", we call for the freedom of hundreds whose names we do not know, certain they are facing inhuman conditions in Syrian prisons."

Ghazzawi's friends inside Syria and beyond all stressed her radical commitment to freedom, to direct action, to internationalism, and to solidarity across borders and identities. They praised her as a dedicated fighter, a sympathetic mentor, a tireless activist, and a loyal friend. Many online pages and petitions have been out on the internet since Razan was arrested. Hundreds of activists are seeking to show their support to her and to the Syrian people's revolt against dictatorship and oppression.

□□*For Further info please check:*

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Free-Razan/283434988361045?ref=ts>

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