

# 30 Days for Freedom

4 April - 3 May 2014

#FreethePress

WAN-IFRA [www.worldpressfreedomday.org](http://www.worldpressfreedomday.org)

H.E. Bashar Al-Assad,  
President of the Syrian Arab Republic

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Your Excellency,

We are writing as part of the global online campaign '30 Days for Freedom' to call for the release of Mazen Darwish, Hani Al-Zitani and Hussein Ghrer who represent the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), imprisoned since 16 February 2012.

Mazen Darwish, founder of the SCM, and his two colleagues, Hussain Ghrer and Hani Al-Zitani, have been imprisoned for more than two years for promoting freedom of expression and reporting human rights violations committed in Syria. They were among 16 people arrested when Syrian Air Force Intelligence (AFI) raided the SCM offices on 16 February 2012.

On 24 March 2014, the General Prosecutor at the Anti-Terrorism Court in Damascus charged Darwish, Ghrer and Al-Zitani for "promoting terrorist acts" under Article 8 of the Anti-Terrorism Act 2012. Their defence has continuously protested a lack of evidence against them.

Countless protests from media watchdog groups and human rights organisations have exposed the injustice of their incarceration. On 14 January 2014, a UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) found their imprisonment to be "arbitrary" and called for their immediate release, yet they remain in custody.

Your Excellency, we urge you to release Mazen Darwish, Hani Al-Zitani and Hussein Ghrer, and all other journalists and human rights advocates imprisoned in Syria for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Sincerely,

**#FreethePress**  
**The 30 Days for Freedom campaign**

Organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum, the '30 Days for Freedom' campaign aims to highlight the plight of imprisoned journalists worldwide in the 30 days leading up to 3 May, World Press Freedom Day.

[www.wan-ifra.org](http://www.wan-ifra.org) / [www.worldpressfreedomday.org](http://www.worldpressfreedomday.org)

