



Supreme Military Council

Dated: 14th December 2013

We, at the Supreme Military Council [SMC], have received your letter regarding your growing concern about the kidnapping of journalists while working on missions inside Syria. We all share in your worries about the impacts on your work to provide the world the real coverage of the deep suffering that Syrian civilians are going through, in addition to those who are fighting for a free and just future for all Syrians. This issue harms our just and legitimate cause, which is to establish a free and democratic state in our Syrian homeland.

We, at the Supreme Military Council [SMC] pledge to do everything in our power to ensure that your important letter – with which we strongly agree – is sent to all unit commanders and brigades operating within Syria, who share in the values of freedom, justice and democracy.

It is important to mention that General Salim Idris, as Chief of Staff of the Supreme Military Council [SMC], has personally followed many of the instances of journalists entering Syria and cares very deeply about providing security and protection to them while they carry out their work, and ensuring their safe departure from Syrian territory. It is equally important to remember that Louay Almokdad, political and media co-ordinator of the Free Syrian Army and a member of the National Coalition, has personally accompanied many journalists in the field on visits lasting a number of days within Syria, many of whom work within your agencies and newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal and the Daily Telegraph.

The Free Syrian Army [FSA] continues to fight with the aim of achieving these fundamental goals in conjunction with political talks, and continues to make significant progress on the ground in the majority of Syria's provinces. We are today, however, facing the challenges of infighting in some of the liberated areas and in a number of areas we face ongoing clashes with the regime and the militia groups who support it. It is regrettable that a number of these armed groups who declare that they stand with the revolution are in reality fighting for their personal agendas and shaping a future for Syria that could not be further from the values of her people, disregarding the Syrian revolution and the dreams of Syrians to live a better life with freedom and dignity.

These groups, alongside the regime of Bashar al-Assad and his militias, are the only people in Syria who benefit from hiding the truth and eclipsing the reality of what is really happening. It is only in their interest to prevent the full picture from reaching and informing international public opinion. Consequently, the international community should put pressure on their governments to intervene decisively to stop the Assad regime and say enough is enough, to help the Syrian people achieve their freedom. The groups that do not want freedom and dignity know very well that getting the facts out of Syria as events happen will not be in the interests of the regime when it kills its own civilians, nor will it be in the interests of undisciplined extremist groups who want to steal the revolution from the people.

It is imperative that we reiterate that the FSA, along with all of its units and brigades, will do its utmost to protect and support journalists in order that they can fulfill their vital work. In addition, we will do everything in our power to bring an end to the abuses against journalists that have and continue to occur regardless

of their coverage. Many of these perpetrators are from groups who are strangers to the culture and good nature of the Syrian people.

Returning to the main theme of your letter, we wish to stress that FSA forces believe in the values of the Syrian people and their morals on the ground. We will do our utmost to release all journalists who have been detained whilst fulfilling their professional duty and highlighting the suffering of the Syrian people. We would like to point out that the criminal regime has, in many cases, been culpable both directly and indirectly, in violations against journalists, activists and even international observers who have come to Syria to find the truth of what is really happening. By no means can Assad be acquitted of the abduction of journalists – carried out by groups supporting his regime who have infiltrated revolutionary groups with the view to distorting the true image of the revolution in front of the international stage. We would remind you that the head of the regime personally admitted in one of his meetings with the media that there are armed groups belonging to him working amongst the revolutionaries, and he certainly aims to use these to tarnish the image of the revolution in front of world public opinion.

We affirm our commitment to the freedom of our people and that we will do everything in our power to ensure the democratic future of our nation. We hope that through your respectable organisations, we can send this message and the message of the Syrian people's struggle for freedom, to all of the international community. We hold your institutions dear to our hearts and value your work with the utmost regard and respect. We sincerely look forward to welcoming you to free and democratic Syria after the fall of the dictatorial regime.

Louay Almokdad

Political and media coordinator of the
Free Syrian Army
Member of the National Coalition
for the Syrian revolutionary and
opposition forces



General Dr. Salim Idris

Chief of Staff of the Supreme Military Council

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