Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Foreign Secretary statement on political prisoners in Syria

2012-03-31

The Foreign Secretary said:

“I am very concerned by reports that Ali Mahmoud Othman, the head of the Media Centre in Homs where Marie Colvin, Paul Conroy and other journalists were based, has been captured by the Syrian regime. There are also reports that some of Othman’s colleagues have also been detained.

“There are reports that Mr Othman has already been tortured and maltreated.

“I call on the Syrian authorities to release Mr Othman and other political prisoners immediately. The Syrian regime will be held responsible for Mr Othman’s safety and his treatment and I will raise his case in Istanbul at the Friends of Syria meeting tomorrow.

“It is believed that up to 10,000 Syrians have been killed by the regime since the start of the crisis, with many more incarcerated, as part of the regime’s campaign of terror.

“The Syrian regime must immediately implement the six-point plan of UN and Arab League Special Envoy Kofi Annan, including a cessation of all hostilities, a genuine Syrian-led political transition, provision of humanitarian assistance and freedom of access for the media, and the release of political prisoners.

“In Istanbul we will take steps to increase the pressure on the regime to carry out these steps and ensure that those responsible for the violence are held to account.”

The Foreign Secretary has also voiced concern about prominent activist Noura Aljizawi. She went missing on 28 March and there are fears for her safety. The Foreign Secretary is also calling for her to be released and returned home as a matter of urgency.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-political-prisoners-in-syria