

Human Rights Commissioner criticizes massive human rights violations in Syria

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13.05.2011 - Press release 

Markus Löning, the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy at the Federal Foreign Office, issued the following statement today (13 May) in view of the Syrian security forces continuing to deploy violence against protesters, representatives of the opposition and civil rights activists:

“The Syrian Government’s brutal and arbitrary treatment of peaceful protesters and dissenters is absolutely appalling. The regime is using its power to trample fundamental human and civil rights instead of relying on dialogue and real reforms.

I call on the Syrian Government, having declared an end to the state of emergency instituted in 1963, now finally to follow up this declaration with practical action. There must be an immediate end to the terrorization of the civilian population, the Syrian people’s right to freedom of expression and freedom to demonstrate must be respected, and all political prisoners must immediately be released.

I explicitly include in this the well-known dissident and civil rights activist Riad Seif. His violent arrest is yet another setback for all those working for freedom of opinion and democracy in Syria.”

Riad Seif, dissident, former Member of Parliament and co-founder of the opposition group Damascus Declaration, was arrested in Damascus on 6 May. He had just been released in 2010 after two and a half years in jail. Before that, he had already been imprisoned from 2002 until 2006. Both of these times, he had been arrested in connection with his political activities as chairman of the Damascus Declaration’s general secretariat. Riad Seif was awarded the Weimar Human Rights Prize in 2003. He is seriously ill and dependent on medical care.

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