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**Public Appeal to: President Bashar al-Assad, President of Syria
From: Members, Executive Committee, International Human Rights
Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, (listed on the left-
hand side of this appeal)**

We are scientists and medical doctors who are members of prestigious national academies worldwide. Our humanitarian work is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the rights of all people. Because we cannot defend all rights for all people, we focus on those of our colleagues—scientists, engineers, and health professionals—whose rights are violated. Since the spring of 2011, we and many others involved in our network have made repeated private appeals to you for the release of our colleagues arrested since the Syrian uprising began—apparently to no avail.

The Syrian Armed Forces, having already taken the lives of more than 9,000 of your citizens, relentlessly continue to inflict terror and brutality on the Syrian people. They are also systematically singling out Syrian health professionals for arrest and often murder. Today, some 500 names of such colleagues have been collected.

Given the gravity of this situation, we, an international group of prominent scientists—including medical doctors like you—now publicly appeal to you to urgently take the following steps:

- Demonstrate respect for medical neutrality and the obligation of health professionals to provide medical care to all people who are ill or injured;
- End immediately the arrests, torture, and sadistic killing of health professionals such as Dr. Sakher Hallak, who was detained and tortured to death in the most barbaric ways imaginable—his mutilated body dumped in the ditch.

Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

(The U.S. National Academies, non-profit, non-governmental honorary societies, host the Network secretariat.)

www.nas.edu.hnetwork

FOUNDING MEMBERS
François Jacob* – *France*
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(*Nobel Laureate)

- Release now the several hundred health professionals detained in your prisons—including, among others, Syrian medical doctor Muhammad Bashir Arab, a pathologist held incommunicado since November 2, 2011—and facilitate their return to medical service.

Surely, President al-Assad, an ophthalmologist and fellow medical doctor such as you is aware of a patient's right to nondiscriminatory treatment, a doctor's obligation to treat the sick and injured, and the principle of non-interference with medical transport, facilities, and personnel.

We appeal to you to find within yourself the necessary compassion for your fellow medical colleagues to immediately order their release and facilitate their medical work with the thousands of sick and injured in your country.