

Citizen journalist sentenced to death for Al-Jazeera interview

DERAA, SYRIA: Reporters Without Borders has released a statement in which it expresses its shock on the news of the death sentence passed on Friday on the citizen journalist Mohammed Abdelmawla al-Hariri for "high treason and contacts with foreign parties". He was arrested on 16 April just after giving an interview to the television station Al-Jazeera about the situation in his hometown of Deraa.



"Such a verdict is unacceptable and out of all proportion to Mohamed al-Hariri's so-called crime of giving an interview to Al-Jazeera," the press freedom organisation said.

"The government of Bashar al-Assad has thus shown the extent of its brutality and cruelty. Reporters Without Borders calls for this contemptible verdict to be overturned and for this citizen journalist to be released immediately."

According to the SKeyes Centre for Media and Cultural Freedom, Hariri was subjected to horrific torture after his arrest, to the point of being partially paralysed. After the verdict was pronounced, he was transferred to Saidnaya military prison north of Damascus.

Hariri gave regular interviews to Al-Jazeera about the situation on the ground in Deraa in southern Syria, such as this one on 15 April:

The Syrian government has accused the Qatari-based station and other foreign media outlets of being part of a global plot to cause chaos in Syria.

Reporters Without Borders lists Assad among 41 predators of freedom of information. Several media workers, citizen journalists and cyber-activists have been killed by the government since the start of the year and dozens more are currently languishing in Syria's prisons.

Source: [Reporters Without Borders \(RSF\)](#)

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