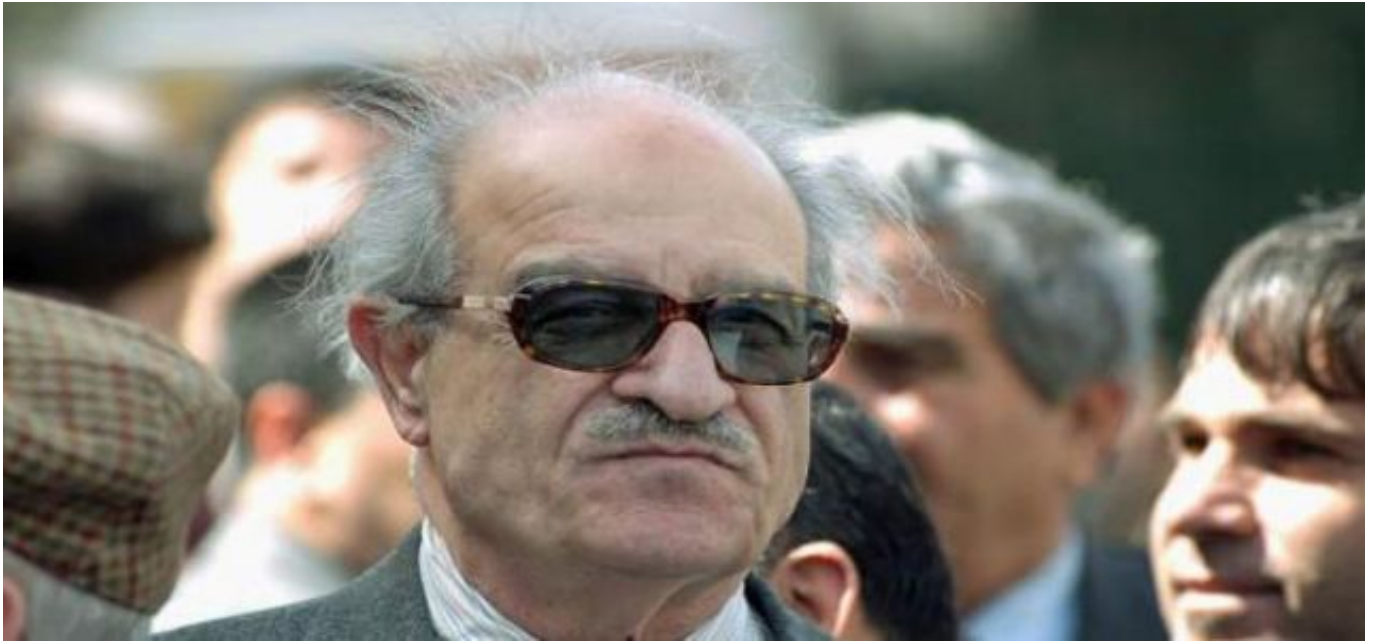


## Syria : Jurist and Activist Haitham Al-Maleh Should Be Released at Once



– The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information denounced the kidnap of the activist and jurist Haitham Al Maleh. ANHRI stated that the Syrian security has turned to be a “kingdom of terror” continuously kidnapping and torturing activists and prohibiting all forums calling reform.

Haitham Al-Maleh has disappeared on 14/10/2009 upon being summoned to security for investigation. The reason for detention and the charges against Al-Maleh are not announced yet.

ANHRI suggested that kidnap could be due to Al-Maleh criticizing the Syrian authorities for repressing freedom of expression on a phone interview that aired on an opposition TV channel on 12/10/2009.

Haitham Al-Maleh, 77 years old, is an eminent lawyer and a distinguished human rights activist . He holds degrees in Syrian and international laws. Starting as a lawyer, he worked as a judge in 1958. Because of his pro freedoms stances, he was dismissed from judiciary in 1966 back to being an attorney.

Al-Maleh was detained in 1980-1986 along with other union leaders and political activists as a result of requesting constitutional reforms. Al-Maleh went through several hunger strikes during his long imprisonment.

Al-Maleh is one of the founders of the Human Rights Association in Syria, elected as chairman till 2006. In May 2006, he was sentenced for 10 days convicted of public official contempt.

In 2006 the Dutch government awarded him Geuzen Medal for “his brave struggle for human rights”.

However, the Syrian authorities would not let him receive the award in person, Al-Maleh was banned from traveling to Netherlands.

The Arabic Network for human rights information ,AHNRI, requests the Syrian authorities to release Al-Maleh and



stop pursuing human rights activists and calls on all institutes that endorse and support freedom of expression to pressure the Syrian government to release Haitham Al-Maleh.