

### Are gays in Syria that correspond with GayMiddleEast.com being threatened ?

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GayMiddleEast.com News

Is it possible that the Syrian authorities have threatened gays in Syria that have corresponded with GayMiddleEast.com? As we cannot ask the gays in Syria if indeed they really have been threatened, we cannot present you with a concrete answer. However, we will present to you the developing situation.

Lately, following a real "wake up" of the gay community in Syria, GayMiddleEast.com has received many e mails from readers in Syria wanting to put up personal ads on the site. However, few were willing to write a few lines about gay life and conditions in Syria. The letter we received from one Syria man on July 8, 2003 invoked many reactions. We also read with interest the article that appeared on August 7, 2003 on the internet site of Al Bawada. In this article, the writer speaks of suppression by the police, arrests of gays in Syria that were simply to "keep the gays in their place." As he wrote, **"Sometimes the police come and if the guys are doing anything "out of the ordinary" like dancing to music, kissing or looking "too gay" - the police take them for a while."** Accordingly, this courageous gay person in Syria ended his letter to GayMiddleEast.com stating: **"I think the gays in the middle east sure need protection."**

S. A. Getenio, manager of GME states, "As soon as I saw the letter from Syria on our GayMiddleEast.com site, I was concerned that the Syrian authorities would react negatively. This is basically the reason that we kept a low profile on the letter. We could have made a red headline out of it. It isn't everyday when we hear about the jailing of gays inside Syria. When we saw the Al Bawada article, we were again concerned for the welfare of our Syrian readers. Two days after that article appeared, GayMiddleEast.com received an e mail from the Syrian who's letter we had put up on the site. He requested that we remove it immediately.

In Syria there is a law called Article 520 of the Penal Code of 1949, that in fact gives the authorities the right to prosecute homosexuals and to give them up to a 3 year prison sentence.

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