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Lebanese family releases eight Alawite Syrians



Eight Alawite Syrians have been released on Saturday after they were kidnapped for almost a month by a Lebanese family, who said it was in retaliation to Syrian authorities detaining their son for over a year, Lebanon's National News Agency reported.

The Syrians, who were kidnapped by Hussein Al-Ahmed in Al-Hisha town in Lebanon's Wadi Khaled that borders Syria, were taken as ransom to press Syrian authorities to release Mohammed Hussein Al-Ahmed.

The release happened after talks with tribal leaders in Wadi Khaled and security officials.

A security official told AFP that the Syrians were taken earlier in April after passing through the Jisr Kamar crossing. The initial number of those kidnapped amounted to nine.

One of the family members, Suleiman Al-Ahmed, speaking on behalf of the family, said he was "sorry for the kidnaping but they had no choice," urging for the immediate release of Mohammed.

Al-Ahmed said Mohammed is not involved in politics and was taken for financial extortion.

Meanwhile, Mohsen Al-Ali who was released said he received "good treatment," and also called for the immediate release of Mohammed.

Syria's majority Sunni Muslim population has been the backbone of the revolt against President Bashar Al-Assad, whose minority Alawite sect has mostly stood with him.

This is not the first kidnaping that occurred along the Syria-Lebanon border.