

Press Release - April 22, 2026

New indications regarding the whereabouts of

Journalists Eva Maria Michelmann and Ahmet Polad



New information suggests that German journalist Eva Maria Michelmann and Kurdish journalist Ahmet Polad (Mehmet Nizam Aslan), who have been missing since January 18, are in the custody by the Syrian transitional government.

Both were last seen on January 18 in Raqqa and, according to eyewitnesses, were taken away in a military vehicle belonging to the armed forces of the Syrian transitional government. Several corroborating sources indicate that they were subsequently taken to a prison in Aleppo.

A video published on April 6 by eyewitness Casim Mihemmed (1), recorded by the television broadcaster Özgür TV, provides new insight into the sequence of events. According to his account, Mihemmed was in the same building as the two journalists on the night of January 18, a youth center in the Seyf El Dewlî district of Raqqa. He stated that Michelmann and Polad were working there on a report about ISIS cells.

Following an attack on the building, an evacuation was organized through Muhammad Abdul Ghani, the official responsible for General Security in Aleppo. Whilst other individuals present were taken to al-Aqtan prison at around 1:30 a.m., according to witness statements, the vehicle carrying the journalists reportedly drove in a different direction.

Further indications emerged in the course of a prisoner exchange on 11 April between the Syrian Transitional Government and the DAANES. Former prisoners from Aleppo consistently reported that Michelmann and Polad are believed to be held in the prison there. These statements were also confirmed by the law firm representing Michelmann's family, Rechtsanwälte Meister und Partner.

According to the witness, Ahmet Polad had sustained injuries to his abdomen and hand but had since recovered. It was also confirmed that a "German journalist" is among the detainees. It is highly likely that this is Eva Maria Michelmann.

According to human rights observers, the prison in question is used to detain individuals who are classified as opposition or as being affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). In this context, there have been repeated reports of arbitrary arrests of journalists and Kurds. Currently, hundreds of people who have been arbitrarily abducted since January remain in the custody of the Syrian Transitional Government.

Against this backdrop, evidence is mounting that Eva Maria Michelmann and Ahmet Polad are in state custody.

We call on the Syrian Transitional Government to ensure the immediate release of the journalists and all abducted persons.

We urge the German Government to use all available diplomatic and consular means to secure the release of Eva Maria Michelmann.

People's Bridge, April 22, 2026

Sources:

(1) <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DW3EnrMiAcK/>