

# ***Mai Skaf, Syrian Actress Who Defied Assad Regime, Dies at 49***

By **Sam Roberts**

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Mai Skaf, a Syrian actress who fled to France to avoid arrest after defying political suppression by President Bashar al-Assad, was found dead on Monday in her apartment in Paris. She was 49.

Her death was confirmed by her cousin Dima Wannous, an author, who did not specify a cause. A colleague, Faris al-Hilou, said she died of a heart attack.

Ms. Skaf was jailed, accused of treason and repeatedly harassed after joining peaceful demonstrations against the government beginning in 2011. Fearing further retaliation — she received death threats — she escaped to Jordan and then continued to Paris, where she had been living since 2013 in self-imposed exile.

“I will not lose hope,” she wrote on her Facebook page two days before her death. “It’s the great Syria, not Assad’s Syria.”

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