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Further Information on UA 190/04 (AMR 51/092/2004, 3 June 2004) and follow-up (AMR 51/118/2004, 21 July 2004) - Prisoner of Conscience

USA **Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejía Castillo (m)**

Camilo Mejía Castillo was released from prison on 15 February, three months before the end of his one-year sentence, on grounds of good conduct. He is now back at home with his family.

He had been imprisoned in May 2004 for desertion, after he refused to return to his unit in Iraq, where he had first been deployed in April 2003. He cited his moral objections to the conduct of US troops towards Iraqi civilians and prisoners, questioned the legality of the war, and applied for conscientious objector status.

His first-level appeal against his conviction is due to be heard soon. This will determine whether his conviction should be overturned, his Bad Conduct Discharge revoked and his rank and pay restored to him. If his appeal is unsuccessful at this level it will then be taken to the the US Army Court of Criminal Appeals.

In a telephone conversation with Amnesty International, Camilo Mejía expressed his profound gratitude to all at AI for taking up his case. He received thousands of letters of support from UA network members while he was in prison. His lawyer said, “I want to thank Amnesty International for its campaign on Camilo’s behalf. I believe the campaign was very import in protecting Camilo in the prison environment, and in securing his release on the minimum date rather than the maximum date.”

No further action is required from the UA network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.