

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST PERMITTED TO RETURN TO FRANCE

Independent journalist Nadir Dendoune was released on bail on 14 February and handed to the French Embassy in Baghdad where he remained, pending the closure of his file by the court. He returned to France on 4 March.

Algerian-French-Australian journalist **Nadir Dendoune** (40), his translator, and the man who was housing him during his stay in Baghdad were released on 14 February, each on bail of 10 million Iraqi dinars (about \$US8,600). Nadir Dendoune was handed to the French Ambassador and taken to the French Embassy in Baghdad. However, he was not allowed to leave the country until the court officially closed his case, which happened on 26 February. He was stopped from leaving the country on 1 March as his visa had expired, but returned to France on 4 March.

Nadir Dendoune was arrested on 23 January in al-Dura, a southern neighbourhood of Baghdad. He was taking photographs of the Iraqi intelligence headquarters, as well as army and police checkpoints, according to Iraqi officials. Nadir Dendoune was in Baghdad to report for the French monthly publication *Le Monde Diplomatique* on the upcoming 10th anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

On 5 February Nadir Dendoune appeared before a judge behind closed doors in the Central Criminal Court in Baghdad in a session that lasted 30 minutes; however, the French Consulate in Iraq was allowed to observe the hearing. Nadir Dendoune was held in an intelligence detention facility.

Journalists in Baghdad are required to seek prior approval from the authorities if they wish to take photographs at checkpoints, and of soldiers and policemen. During his court appearance Nadir Dendoune reportedly said that he had done nothing wrong and that authorities were aware of the nature of his work, and his visa for Iraq had been handed to him by the Iraqi Ambassador to France.

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

This is the first update of UA 32/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE14/002/2013/en>.

Name: Nadir Dendoune

Gender m/f: m

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