

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 50/07 (MDE 24/017/2007, 2 March 2007) Incommunicado detention/Torture and other ill-treatment

SYRIA Jerome (also known as 'Abd al-Rahim) Hibell (m), aged 25, British national

Jerome Hibell was released on 31 March, and returned to the UK that day.

He had been arrested on 20 December, and held incommunicado until 26 March, when he was allowed to telephone his family from the Immigration and Nationality Department Detention Centre, in Damascus. He is known to have been moved to the detention centre several days before he was released.

He had reportedly been held in four detention centres, including the Military Intelligence-run *Far' Falastin* (Palestine Branch). For the first month he said he was kept in solitary confinement and tortured. Throughout his time in custody, he was given very little food, of poor quality. He was apparently not charged with any offence, nor given any reason why he had been arrested.

Jerome Hibell converted to Islam when he was 13 years old. He went to live in Damascus with his partner and their three-year-old son in September 2005, and had been studying Arabic at Damascus University until he was arrested.

Arbitrary arrest and prolonged incommunicado detention are fairly common in Syria. Amnesty International has repeatedly raised its concerns about the systematic use of torture and other ill-treatment in Syrian places of detention, not least the notorious *Far' Falastin*.

His family have asked for their thanks to be passed to all those who campaigned on Jerome Hibell's behalf.

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