

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 268/06 (MDE 24/060/2006, 04 October 2006) and follow-up (MDE 24/008/2008, 08 February 2008) – Prisoner of conscience/ medical concern

SYRIA Dr 'Aref Dalilah (m), aged 65, former Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Aleppo University

Dr. Aref Dalilah was released on 07 August after he was granted a presidential amnesty. Amnesty International welcomes Dr. Aref Dalilah's release and hopes it will be followed by the release of all other prisoners of conscience in Syria.

In July 2002, Dr. Aref Dalilah was convicted by the State Security Court of "attempting to change the constitution by illegal means". He served seven years of a 10-year sentence, much of it spent in solitary confinement in the political wing of 'Adra prison, Damascus.

Dr. Aref Dalilah 's health deteriorated prior to his release. Since February he has suffered from a blood clot in his lung, deep-vein thrombosis, swelling of the heart and diabetes. In May 2006, he had a stroke and lost some of the feeling on the left side of his body.

Following his release, Dr. Aref Dalilah said, "I am thankful for all the efforts made by everyone at Amnesty International and all those who took part in actions on my behalf. We are united in the struggle for the causes of justice and democracy. This struggle is still ongoing."

Background:

Out of the ten prominent individuals detained for their roles in the so-called "Damascus Spring", 'Aref Dalilah received the longest sentence. The "Damascus Spring" describes the brief period of increased tolerance from the authorities for freedom of expression and pro-reform activities that followed Bashar al-Assad's inauguration as President in July 2000.

No further action by the UA Network is requested at present. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.