

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN HELD FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS RELEASED

Syrian retired teacher Mohammed Najati Tayyara was released on 17 January following a general amnesty for “offences” allegedly committed since the start of widespread unrest in Syria in March 2011. He had been arrested by Syrian Political Security officers on 12 May 2011. He was subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment while in detention.

Mohammed Najati Tayyara, a retired school teacher from Homs, was arrested on 12 May 2011 following media interviews he gave about human rights violations committed by Syrian security forces against pro-reform protesters in Syria. He was initially taken to the Political Security branch in Homs and then transferred to the Homs Central Prison. During his detention, Mohammed Najati Tayyara was brought before a criminal court judge and charged under Article 286 of the Syrian Penal Code for “convey[ing] within Syria false news that could debilitate the morale of the nation”. On 29 August 2011, a judge ordered his release on bail pending his trial. However, while in prison awaiting his release, he was re-arrested by Air Force Intelligence officers.

Mohammed Najati Tayyara was then taken to the Air Force Intelligence branch in Homs where he was beaten severely. After one week he was transferred to the Military Intelligence-run detention centre known as “al-Boloneh Prison” in Homs. One week later, he was finally taken back Homs Central Prison where he spent the rest of his detention in extremely cramped conditions, reportedly held in a cell with about 300 other detainees, sharing only one toilet between them. He was released on 17 January 2012 following a general amnesty ordered by President Bashar al-Assad two days earlier. The amnesty covered “offences” connected to the unrest, including participation in peaceful demonstrations.

The Syrian government claimed to have released a total of 7,604 detainees between November 2011 and January 2012, following a number of general amnesties. However, a mission of Arab League observers was only able to verify two-thirds of this figure by January 2012.

Mohammed Najati Tayyara was subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment during his time in detention. One of his ribs was broken during a beating which remained undiagnosed during his detention. He also developed a lung infection before his release, for which he appears not to have received adequate medical treatment.

Thanks to all of those who took action on behalf of Mohammed Najati Tayyara. No further appeals from the network are required at present.

This is the first update of UA 273/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/053/2011/en>

Name: Mohammed Najati Tayyara

Gender m/f: M

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