

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST RELEASED

Dr Mohamed al-Ammar, a peaceful advocate of democratic reform from Dera'a, southern Syria, was released on 22 April after spending more than one month in incommunicado detention.

Dr Mohamed al-Ammar went missing on his way home from work on 19 March. He left the clinic where he works to drive home at around 6pm, as usual. The journey home normally takes him around 10 minutes. According to a contact in Syria, he had still not arrived home at 9pm, and this worried his family. When they still had not heard from him the next day, members of his family went to ask about him at the local police station, but a police officer told them that no one had heard anything about Dr Mohamed al-Ammar. It was believed that Dr Mohamed al-Ammar was being held at the Military Intelligence branch in Dera'a, after the family was informed from an unofficial source that he was arrested at the Military Intelligence-run checkpoint on his way home.

A local source told Amnesty International that Dr Mohamed al-Ammar had indeed been arrested at the Military Intelligence-run checkpoint and was held incommunicado at the Military Intelligence branch in Dera'a throughout the period of his detention. He was reportedly detained in an overcrowded, cold and dark cell, forced to stand up for prolonged periods of time and blindfolded during interrogation.

According to the same source, on the day of his release, Dr Mohamed al-Ammar was brought before an investigating judge in Dera'a. The judge apparently questioned him about "belonging to a secret organization" and then decided not to charge him.

Dr Mohamed al-Ammar is a longstanding advocate of peaceful democratic reform in Syria. He has published his calls widely over the internet, has given public speeches and attended conferences. Since the start of the current unrest in Syria, he has been arrested four times in connection with his pro-reform activities.

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

This is the first update of UA: 112/12 Index: MDE 24/036/2012. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/036/2012/en>

Name: Dr Mohamed al-Ammar
Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 112/12 Index: MDE 24/051/2012 Issue Date: 29 May 2012