

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN MAN RELEASED

Wa'el Hammada, a Syrian man who had been held incommunicado detention and reportedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, was released on bail on 1 August. He and his brother 'Abd al-Rahman Hammada have been charged and are currently awaiting trial.

Following his arrest on 12 May and incommunicado detention at an Air Force Security branch in Damascus, **Wa'el Hammada** was taken before an investigative judge on 12 July. He was allowed to meet with his lawyer for 15 minutes. The judge charged Wa'el Hammada with "weakening national sentiment" (Article 285 of the Syrian Penal Code), "causing sectarian strife" (Article 307), charges related to participation in "secret organizations" (Article 327) and charges related to participation in and incitement of riots (Articles 335 and 336).

On the same day, Wa'el Hammada was taken to 'Adra prison, near Damascus, where he remained until his release. During his detention at 'Adra, he was allowed to receive visits from his lawyer. He is now reunited with his family while awaiting trial.

Amnesty International has been informed that Wa'el Hammada was kept in solitary confinement during the last 25 days of his initial detention at the Air Force Security branch. Reliable sources have said that he was tortured and otherwise ill-treated while held there and that his interrogation was focused on the activities of his wife, Razan Zaitouneh, a prominent Syrian human rights lawyer. Amnesty International therefore believes that his charges may be related both to his own peaceful involvement in popular protests calling for political reform and to the human rights work of his wife.

Thanks to all of those who took action on behalf of Wa'el Hammada and his brother 'Abd al-Rahman Hammada. No further appeals from the network are required at present but Amnesty International will continue to monitor this case.

This is the third update of UA 149/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/037/2011/en>

Name: Wa'el Hammada
Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 149/11 Index: MDE 24/040/2011 Issue Date: 11 August 2011