

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN POLITICAL ACTIVIST RELEASED ON BAIL

Syrian political activist Ahmed Mustafa Ben-Mohammed, usually known by his pen name of Pir Rostom, was released on bail on 27 April.

Pir Rostom continues to await possible referral for trial on charges such as inciting sectarian and racial strife. It is believed that these relate to articles written by him that were published online. Amnesty International believes that Pir Rostom is no longer at imminent risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Pir Rostom was arrested on 7 November 2009 (previously stated as being on 5 November) at his home in the town of 'Afreeen, near Aleppo, shortly after his return from the Kurdistan region of Iraq, where he had lived for two years. According to a source in Syria, he was held incommunicado for over three months. For most of this time, he was detained in Political Security branches in the cities of Aleppo and Damascus, but he was also held for 10 days in Palestine branch, a Military Intelligence-run detention centre in Damascus well-known for torture. According to Amnesty International's source, while held in the Political Security branch in Damascus, Pir Rostom spent around 50 days in solitary confinement.

Pir Rostom was transferred to Aleppo Central Prison on 19 January, where he was allowed visits by his family and lawyer. He was also allowed access to medication for a stomach ulcer and a kidney infection.

Thanks to all those who took action on behalf of Pir Rostom. We will continue to monitor his case. No further appeals from the UA network are required at present.

This is the first update of UA 327/09 (MDE 24/036/2009). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE24/036/2009/en>

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