

URGENT ACTION

PRISON SENTENCE OVERTURNED, FINE UPHELD

Activist Hishamuddin Rais has had his nine-month jail sentence reduced to a fine following a unanimous decision by the Court of Appeal on 16 May. The Court of Appeal upheld that he has been found guilty of sedition.

The Court of Appeal in Putrajaya, Malaysia delivered its verdict in the final appeal in **Hishamuddin Rais'** sedition case on 16 May. The Court of Appeal unanimously set aside the decision of the Kuala Lumpur High Court, which sentenced Hishamuddin Rais to a nine month term of imprisonment, and substituted it with a fine of RM5,000 (USD \$1,237). The Court of Appeal upheld that Hishamuddin Rais has been found guilty of sedition for criticizing the results of Malaysia's 13th General Elections and for calling for a re-election in a forum that took place on 13 May 2013.

Following an appeal by the prosecution in 2015 for a heavier sentence than a RM5,000 fine (USD\$1,237), the Kuala Lumpur High Court sentenced Hishamuddin Rais to a 9 month jail sentence in January 2016. The prison sentence has now been overturned. As a result, Hishamuddin Rais no longer faces imprisonment for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and calling upon others to exercise their rights to peaceful assembly.

In 2015 alone, at least 91 individuals were arrested, charged or investigated for sedition in Malaysia. Since the beginning of 2016, the Kuala Lumpur High Court has upheld fines against Hishamuddin Rais and student activist Adam Adli for sedition and sentenced activist Haris Ibrahim to eight months imprisonment for sedition.

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

This is the first update of UA: 111/16. For further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa28/4012/2016/en/>

Name: Hishamuddin Rais

Gender: m/f: m

Further information on UA: 111/16 Index: ASA 28/4051/2016 Issue Date: 16 May 2016

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