

URGENT ACTION

QATARI PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE RELEASED

Prisoner of conscience Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah was pardoned on 22 May and deported to Qatar. He had been serving a seven-year prison sentence.

Qatari national **Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah** received a pardon on 22 May from the president of the UAE, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and was deported to Qatar that day. A medical doctor, he had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on 3 March 2014.

Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah had been detained without a warrant on 26 February 2013 as he waited for a connecting flight to Qatar in Dubai International Airport. The authorities held him in a secret location for several months and refused to reveal his whereabouts to his family. He was eventually allowed limited visits from them.

At his trial, which began on 4 November 2013, Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah alleged that interrogators had beaten him on his face and on the soles of his feet, deprived him of sleep, constantly exposed him to bright light, forced him to drink an unidentified liquid that he feared was poisonous and threatened to pull out his fingernails and hang him upside down until he died. On 11 March 2013 he was forced to make a statement on video. His interrogators assured him that they would then release him and allow him to return home to Qatar, but they kept him in detention. He was also forced to sign and put his fingerprints on numerous documents that he had not been allowed to read. Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah was only allowed to meet with his lawyer twice, after his trial had begun. He was transferred out of secret detention on 17 November 2013, after the start of his trial, to al-Razeen Prison in Abu Dhabi. His lawyer was kept under close surveillance during the trial.

Despite Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah's allegations of torture, the court did not order an independent investigation and accepted his "confession" as evidence of his guilt. The court convicted Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah under Article 180 of the Penal Code of "providing financial support to families of the members of al-Islah" (Reform and Social Guidance Association), an association legally established in 1974, and of "providing financial support to the families of al-Islah members", who had been convicted after a mass trial in 2013.

His son, Abdulrahman al-Jaidah, attended his father's trial and was briefly detained on 23 December 2013 by State Security officers who asked him to step outside the courtroom. They handcuffed him, placed a bag over his head so that he could not see, and drove him to an undisclosed location where they questioned him about his public campaigning for the release of his father. He asked for access to a lawyer, but was denied. The State Security officers took Abdulrahman al-Jaidah's fingerprints, scanned his irises and made him sign a written apology for "talking badly about the UAE" before deporting him the next day, under escort, by air to Qatar.

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

This is the second update of UA: 301/13. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde25/002/2014/en/>

Name: Mahmoud al-Jaidah, Abdulrahman al-Jaidah
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 301/13 Index: MDE 25/1857/2015 Issue Date: 15 June 2015

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