

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 33/036/2002

19 November 2002

**Further information on UA 329/02 (ASA 33/033/2002, 7 November 2002) - possible prisoner of conscience/detention without charge/fear of forcible transfer**

**PAKISTANDr Amir Aziz (m), aged 40  
and three other men, names unknown**

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Dr Amir Aziz was released without charge in the early morning of 19 November, after 29 days in detention. He has now returned to his home in the city of Lahore. Dr Aziz' brother was quoted in the media as saying: "His eyes are red and swollen due to sleepless nights."

Dr Amir Aziz was detained in Lahore on 21 October, in a joint operation of Pakistani intelligence and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Soon after his arrest, Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider was quoted in the local media as saying that Dr Amir Aziz was being questioned as his name had been mentioned by suspected members of the Taliban and *al-Qaeda* held in US custody in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The release of Dr Amir Aziz follows a week in which the state refused to cooperate with high court orders to bring Dr Amir Aziz before the court.

In the past few days, the Lahore High Court dealt with two writ petitions filed by the mother of Dr Amir Aziz and a local political leader who opposed his detention. On 18 November the court declared the detention of Dr Amir Aziz "illegal and without lawful authority" and ordered the government to release him immediately. On 19 November, the court also ordered the federal government and the provincial government of Punjab, where Dr Amir Aziz was detained, to explain in writing why they had failed to comply with earlier orders to bring him before the court.

On 13 November, the court had ordered the government to bring the detainee to court on 15 November; it also restrained the government from extraditing the detainee to any country without the permission of the court. During the hearing on 13 November, the Deputy Attorney General stated that Dr Amir Aziz was not in the custody of the any security agency working under the Interior Ministry and that the military intelligence unit, the Interservices Intelligence (ISI) had not responded to requests for information on the whereabouts of Dr Amir Aziz.

On 15 November, the Interior Ministry informed the court that Dr Amir Aziz was not in their custody and that therefore they could not bring him before the court. The Ministry requested more time to ascertain which agency held the detainee. The court declared this response unsatisfactory and said it was the duty of the Interior Ministry to provide protection to people and to ensure that all legal requirements are fulfilled during arrest and detention.

There is no definite information on the identity or whereabouts of three other men detained on 6 November from Lahore's Ghurki Hospital, where Dr Amir Aziz also works. Amnesty International has received unconfirmed reports that they may have been released, but will continue to monitor their case, and take further action if necessary.

**No further action is required from the UA network at present. Thank you to all those who sent appeals.**