

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 134/04 (MDE 24/026/2004, 1 April 2004) - Possible prisoner of conscience / Fear of torture or ill-treatment

SYRIA Muhammad Ghanem (m), born 1955, school teacher/ writer

Muhammad Ghanem was released on the night of 3/4 April 2004 after 13 days in detention. In a telephone call with *al-Hayat* newspaper, Muhammad Ghanem said that "I was not requested to give a written apology; rather they asked me to explain my articles on the internet in which I called for the [Syrian] Kurds to be given nationality and to be allowed to revive some of their traditional activities. But I never called for violence and I don't agree with it."

Muhammad Ghanem added that he had been transferred from al-Raqqa, in northern Syria, to Deir al-Zur in the east, and to the capital Damascus, and that for 13 days he had not been allowed to eat, causing him digestive and other health problems. "The last time I ate was at home, and then the next time was [here] with my wife and children," he said.

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