

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 14/018/2006

04 April 2006

Further Information on UA 299/05 (MDE 14/046/2005, 30 November 2005) and follow-ups (MDE 14/048/2005, 22 December 2005 and MDE 14/017/2006, 29 March 2006) - Unfair trial/possible prisoner of conscience

IRAQ

Kamal Sayid Qadir (m), aged 48, Austrian national, writer

Kamal Sayid Qadir was released on 3 April after receiving an official pardon from the Prime Minister of the Kurdish regional government in Iraq. He is said to be in good health and is staying at a hotel in the city of Arbil. He plans to return to Austria in the very near future.

Kamal Sayid Qadir was initially tried for "defamation" in December 2005, after he wrote several articles which were published on the internet. It was claimed that these articles strongly criticized the leadership of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), one of two parties holding power in the Kurdish-dominated region. He was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment, but after worldwide protests and international pressure, the Court of Cassation referred the case back to a criminal court in Arbil for re-trial. On 26 March, he was re-tried and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment.

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