

URGENT ACTION

TRAVEL HOPE FOR PALESTINIAN REFUGEE

UK authorities have permitted Mahmoud Abu Rideh to apply for travel documentation with partial international recognition. He remains subject to the restrictive conditions of his "control order" at his home in London. His physical and mental health remains poor.

During the High Court hearing for Mahmoud Abu Rideh's application for judicial review on 3 July, lawyers for the UK government agreed to permit him to apply for travel documentation with partial international recognition. The documentation would enable him to leave the United Kingdom, provided another state is willing to give him the right to enter its territory. Mahmoud Abu Rideh has been subjected to a "control order", imposed by the UK government since the legislation permitting control orders came into effect in March 2005

At the hearing on 3 July, the UK authorities agreed to make a "Certificate of Travel", valid for five years, available to Mahmoud Abu Rideh. In theory, this document will provide Mahmoud Abu Rideh with documentation that will allow him to travel to a limited number of countries and to re-enter the United Kingdom during the period of its validity. Mahmoud Abu Rideh's lawyers submitted his application for the Certificate of Travel on the same day.

The Certificate of Travel is normally only issued by the UK government to individuals who do not have refugee status or individuals not recognized as stateless. Mahmoud Abu Rideh and his lawyers maintain that Mahmoud Abu Rideh is stateless and a Palestinian refugee, but that he will accept a Certificate of Travel in the current circumstances, given the previous delay by UK authorities and Mahmoud Abu Rideh's state of mental and physical health. Mahmoud Abu Rideh has stated that he does "not want to be stuck on a legal treadmill year after year. If this document lets me go, I will take it."

Mahmoud Abu Rideh's lawyers have expressed their thanks to Amnesty International activists. They believe that the UK authorities' decision to agree to allow him access to travel documentation was achieved due to the expression of public concern for his case.

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

This is the first update of UA 140/09 (EUR 45/006/2009).

Further information:

amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR45/006/2009/en

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