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United Arab Emirates: International observers highlight need for fair trial

Joint statement by Alkarama for Human Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch

International trial observers from Alkarama for Human Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty International are travelling to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in order to monitor the trial on Monday 20 July 2009 of United States of America (US) national, Naji Hamdan.

The presence of the trial observers underscores the importance of fair trial procedures in the UAE and they will be looking to see that the highest fair trial standards are applied in Naji Hamdan's case.

On 26 August 2008, the UAE state security forces (*Amn al-Dawla*) arrested Naji Hamdan, a US citizen, at his home in the UAE and detained him incommunicado for three months at a secret location. His trial before the Abu Dhabi State Supreme Court is due to take place on Monday, 20 July 2009. He faces charges of promoting terrorism; participating in the work of a terrorist organization; and assisting a terrorist organization.

It is alleged that Naji Hamdan was tortured and ill-treated during his incommunicado detention. On 15 June 2009, at his first appearance before the State Supreme Court, he declared that signed confessions being used as evidence against him are false and were only signed as a result of the torture he suffered.

The trial observers will be paying particular attention to how the allegations of torture raised by Mr. Hamdan will be addressed by the Prosecuting Authorities, the presiding judges and other relevant government officials, in accordance with the UAE's international obligations.

Alkarama for Human Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch will assess the observers' findings and make public their findings in due course.

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