

Human Rights Commissioner criticizes sentencing of Syrian journalist Ali Abdallah

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14.03.2011 - Press release 

On 13 March, Syrian journalist Ali Abdallah was sentenced to one and a half years in jail for “harming the state’s relations with another country”. The background is an article he wrote in prison about Iran’s 2009 presidential elections, the Iranian government system and Syrian-Lebanese relations.

Markus Löning, the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office, issued the following statement on the matter today (15 March):

“The sentence imposed on Ali Abdallah is a setback for all those working for freedom of opinion and democracy in Syria.

When the 80-year-old human rights activist Haitham Al-Maleh was released a few days ago, people started to hope that the Syrian Government would move closer to respecting civil liberties and human rights, as it had pledged to do under international law.

The sentence which has been passed on Ali Abdallah sends the wrong signal, particularly in view of the democratic revolution underway in the region. I call for the immediate release of Ali Abdallah and all other political prisoners.”

Prior to this judgment, Ali Abdallah served a prison term of two and a half years for his political activism which ended on 17 July 2010. He was not released, because the trial concerning his controversial article was begun immediately following the end of his sentence.

Syria has signed and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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