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Update: Hosseini Freed From Detention

New America Media, News Update, Camille T. Taiara, Oct 19, 2006

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Editor's Note: An Iranian immigration detainee featured in [Disappeared in America on Oct. 10](#) was released last week. NAM spoke to him by phone.

SAN FRANCISCO--On Friday, Oct. 13, Masoud Hosseini became a free man. Hosseini had spent four years behind bars as an immigration detainee -- most recently, in Georgia's Colquitt County Jail -- based on terrorism allegations but without facing any criminal charges.

Over the telephone on Oct. 16, Hosseini described "giv[ing] all his stuff away" to fellow jail mates before being bussed to the Greyhound station in Tallahassee carrying sacks full of documents related to his case conspicuously stamped by the detention facility. His first purchase outside of jail was a large bag to carry them in.

"Anything for me was fun," he said of his first few hours on the outside. "Just going down the street, looking at the people, the new cars.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. That night, at a hotel, "I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking, if I want to, I can really walk out of this room?"

Disappeared in America reported on Hosseini's case in an article published three days prior to his release: The Department of Homeland Security had accused Hosseini of having ties to the Iranian dissident group Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), which the US designated as a terrorist organization in 1997. But it held him in immigration detention and refused to allow him a bail hearing as his visa case made its way through numerous immigration appeals.

On Sept. 28, the Ninth US Circuit Court of Appeals found that Hosseini "is more likely than not to be tortured" if he were deported to his native Iran. It granted Hosseini protection under the Convention Against Torture, and barred the government from deporting Hosseini until such

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a time that he would no longer be at risk.

It's unclear why the government opted to release Hosseini at this time after insisting on keeping him behind bars for so long, arguing he presented a danger. The Ninth Circuit remanded Hosseini's case to a lower immigration appeals board, instructing it to re-examine whether the government's evidence supports the conclusion that Hosseini poses a threat to national security.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement did not return our calls by press time. Hosseini's attorney, Matt Adams of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, told us the government failed to tell him they were letting his client go.

Now Hosseini reports he's under supervised release, which requires him to report to the immigration authorities on a regular basis until authorities determine his legal status in the country.

He's got a lot of time to make up for.

"I'm four years behind," said Hosseini from North Carolina, where his brother and sister live. "But I'm so happy to be free."

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