

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 20/004/2005

15 July 2005

UA 187/05 **Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ Possible prisoners of conscience**

OMAN **Abdullah Al Riyami (m), aged 40, writer**
Taiba al Mawali (f), former member of parliament

Writer Abdullah Al Riyami and former member of parliament Taiba al Mawali have both been detained in the capital Muscat. Abdullah Al Riyami may be held incommunicado and is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Amnesty International believes that they may both be prisoners of conscience, held solely for the non-violent expression of their beliefs.

According to reports, the section of the police headquarters responsible for internal security contacted Abdullah Al Riyami on 11 July, summoning him to the headquarters the following day. On 12 July, a police officer reportedly escorted him from the police headquarters back to his home, where he left his mobile phone. He has not been seen since. It is not known why he was summoned to the police station, but it is believed that it may be connected to his criticism of the government. In 2004, he was reportedly banned from publishing any poems or articles. This followed his criticism of the government during an appearance on Iranian television station, *Al-Alam*.

Taiba al Mawali was reportedly arrested at the beginning of June and later sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment by a Lower Court in Muscat on 13 July in connection with her criticisms of the government. Amnesty International has no information about where she is detained. She reportedly acted as an observer at the trial in May 2005 of 31 prisoners of conscience arrested in early 2005 (see UA 26/05, MDE 20/002/2005, 28 January 2005, and follow-up). The men were sentenced to prison terms ranging between seven and 20 years but were pardoned by the Sultan of Oman in June and have since been released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mass arrests and incommunicado detention of political opponents of the government of Oman has often led to allegations of torture and ill-treatment. Torture and ill-treatment may be used during interrogation in order to obtain information about political suspects or for use as evidence in court to obtain convictions following unfair trials

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Abdullah Al Riyami may be held incommunicado and may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment;
- seeking assurances that Abdullah Al Riyami will not be tortured or ill-treated, and that both he and Taiba al Mawali will be given prompt access to their families, lawyers and any medical attention, if necessary;
- calling for Abdullah Al Riyami and Taiba al Mawali to be released immediately and unconditionally, if they are prisoners of conscience, held solely for the non-violent expression of their beliefs;
- asking for details of any recognizably criminal charges against Abdullah Al Riyami and Taiba al Mawali together with the details of legal proceedings against them, including the dates of trial hearings and the name of the court before which they may appear.

APPEALS TO:

Sultan of Oman
His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
Diwan of the Royal Court

PO Box 875, Muscat 113
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: + 968 24 735 375
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Justice
His Excellency Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Zaher al-Hinai
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
PO Box 354, Muscat 112
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: + 968 24 607716
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior
His Excellency Sa'ud bin Brahim al-Busa'idi
Minister of Interior, Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127, Ruwi 112
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: + 968 24 797779
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Oman accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 August 2005.