

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/Ill-treatment

18 June 1993

SAUDI ARABIA: Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed
Dr Muhammad 'Abdullah al-Mas'ari

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed who was arrested at his house by members of al-Mabahith al-'Amma (General Intelligence) on 15 June 1993 and taken to an unknown location. It is feared that Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed may be subjected to ill-treatment or torture while being held in incommunicado detention.

Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed, a writer and a lecturer at al-Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh, was one of the six founding members of Lujnat al-Difa' 'an al-Huquq al-Shar'iyya (Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights-CDLR) in Saudi Arabia. The spokesperson of the CDLR, Dr Muhammad al-Mas'ari, has been held incommunicado since his arrest on 15 May. He has allegedly been tortured by being deprived of sleep for prolonged periods.

Since the foundation of the CDLR, Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed has, on more than one occasion, been summoned for questioning by the authorities. During these meetings attempts were reportedly made to persuade him and other CDLR founding members to disband the committee. Amnesty International believes that Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhammad al-Mas'ari are prisoners of conscience arrested solely for the peaceful expression of their political beliefs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The CDLR was founded in Riyadh on 3 May by six prominent Saudi Arabian religious scholars and professionals, among them Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed. In a statement the group announced the aims of the organization to be the "alleviation of injustice...and the defence of legitimate rights decided by the *Shari'a* (Islamic law)". It called on individuals to report to the committee any injustice or information that may help eliminate injustice. On 11 May the Council of Senior 'Ulama (religious scholars), the highest religious authority in Saudi Arabia, issued a statement expressing surprise at the establishment of such an organization, stating that Saudi Arabia had no need for human rights organizations since it was ruled in accordance with the *Shari'a*.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English, Arabic or in your own language:

- seeking assurances that both Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhammad al-Mas'ari are being treated humanely and urging that they be allowed access to family members, defence counsel and doctors;
- urging that Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhammad al-Mas'ari be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO

1) His Royal Highness
Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
PO Box 2833
Airport Road

Riyadh 11134

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: Minister Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Faxes: + 966 1 4050130

Telexes: 404416

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

2) His Royal Highness

Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul-'Aziz

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Nasseriya Street

Riyadh 11124

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: Minister Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Telexes: 405000

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

and to diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country.

The World Conference on Human Rights is being held in Austria this month and you can enhance the power of your appeals by also sending copies to the diplomatic representative of Saudi Arabia in Austria during June at the following address:

Embassy of Saudi Arabia:

The Ambassador:

Botschaft von Saudi-Arabien

Formanekgasse 38

1190 Wien

Austria

Faxes: + 43 1 36 25 60

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 July 1993.