

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 23/009/2004

02 July 2004

Further Information on UA 112/04 (MDE 23/005/2004, 30 April 2004) and follow-up (MDE 23/003/2004, 17 March 2004) - Fear of Torture and ill-treatment

**SAUDI ARABIA**      Dr Matrouk al-Falih, (m), Professor of political science at King Sa'ud University, Riyadh  
Dr Abdullah al-Hamid, (m), former professor of contemporary literature at Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud University, Riyadh  
Ali al Demniy (m), writer

**Released:**            Abdel Rahman al-Lahem (m), lawyer

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The three men named above were brought to court in mid-June, after they were reported to have refused to sign pledges to liaise with the authorities before carrying out any public activity. Amnesty International is concerned that they may be prisoners of conscience, held solely for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association.

All three are reported to have been allowed access to their families and lawyers. They are reported to have been well treated, and allowed books and newspapers. Their lawyers were reportedly present at the court session; however, it is still not clear what charges have been brought against them.

Abdel Rahman al-Lahem was reportedly released from prison in May. He was arrested on 17 March after he appeared on the *al-Jazeera* TV station criticising the 15 March arrests of Dr Matrouk al-Falih and other prominent academics who had criticised the government National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) for its lack of independence.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Due to the secrecy of the Saudi Arabian justice system, trials are often held behind closed doors. In the rare instances when people are charged and brought to trial, the proceedings invariably fail to meet the most elementary standards of fairness.

**Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation of the detainees, and take further action as necessary. Please send a final round of appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic or your own language:**

- calling for the three detainees (naming them) to be released immediately and unconditionally if they are held solely for their criticism of the NCHR or for planning to set up their own human rights organisation;
- calling for anyone charged with a recognizably criminal offence to be given a prompt and fair trial.

## APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin >Abdul >Aziz,  
Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior  
P.O. Box 2933, Airport Road,  
Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Telegram:**            **Minister of Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

**Fax:**                    **+ 966 1 403 1185 (it may be difficult to get through, please keep trying)**

**Telex:** 404416  
**Salutation:** Your Royal Highness

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin >Abdul >Aziz Al-Saud,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Nasseriya Street,  
Riyadh 11124, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Telegram:** Foreign Affairs Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
**Fax:** + 966 1 403 0159 (it may be difficult to get through, please keep trying)  
**Telex:** 405000  
**Salutation:** Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Dr. >Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh  
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice  
University Street,  
Riyadh 11137, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Telegram:** Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
**Fax:** + 966 1 401 1741  
**Telex:** 405 980 MINJUS SJ  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

King and Prime Minister

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines

His Majesty King Fahd bin >Abdul >Aziz Al-Saud,  
Office of H.M. The King, Royal Court,  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Telegram:** King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
**Salutation:** Your Majesty

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 August 2004.