

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST ARRESTED, RISKS TORTURE

Omani human rights activist Saeed Jaddad has been held incommunicado since 10 December, when he was arrested in the city of Salalah. He may be a prisoner of conscience, detained for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Saeed Jaddad was arrested after the security forces raided his home in Salalah, in the southern province of Dhofar, on 10 December at 9pm. They searched his home and confiscated his phone and computers. They did not tell his family why they were arresting him or where they were taking him. His family have repeatedly sought information about his whereabouts but the authorities have told them nothing.

Saeed Jaddad, aged 48, suffers from high blood pressure and heart problems for which doctors have prescribed specific medication, which he did not take with him when he was arrested.

Saeed Jaddad had been prevented from leaving Oman on 31 October. He was travelling to Istanbul when immigration officers at Salalah International Airport told him that he had been the subject of a travel ban since July 2014, and confiscated his passport.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Calling on the Omani authorities to disclose the whereabouts of Saeed Jaddad and the exact reasons for detaining him;
- Calling on them to release him immediately and unconditionally if he is detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, or else charge him with a recognizably criminal offence and try him in proceedings that meet international standards for fair trial;
- Calling on them to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and receives the medication he requires.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JANUARY 2015 TO:

Head of State and Prime Minister
His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id
Diwan of the Royal Court
The Palace, Muscat 113
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: +968 24 735 375
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of the Interior
His Excellency Hamoud bin Faisal bin
Said Al Busaidi
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127, Ruwi 112, Muscat
Sultanate of Oman
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Chairman, National Human Rights
Commission
Mr Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Riyami
P.O. Box 29, Postal Code: 103
Bareq A' Shati
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Fax: +968 24 648 801

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Saeed Jaddad is a businessman. He has called for political and social reform in Oman via his blog, which is restricted to invited readers only, and Facebook.

Saeed Jaddad has faced repeated arrest. In December 2011, he took part in peaceful pro-reform demonstrations in Dhofar, southern Oman. He was arrested on 14 January 2013 and held for six months, including eight days in solitary confinement. He was released at the end of June 2013 but was banned from publishing articles in the national media and the authorities tried to pressure him into signing a statement renouncing pro-reform and human rights activities. He faced further harassment and intimidation the next month.

In August 2013 he faced charges of “undermining the status and prestige of the state” after he called for political and social reform, and held meetings with members of the European Parliament. He was never tried, but it is believed the authorities could use longstanding accusations against him in order to charge him in connection with his peaceful actions.

Amnesty International documented instances of prolonged arbitrary and incommunicado detention in Oman in 2013 and 2014. Cases of torture and other ill-treatment by state security officials during detention were also reported, with activists and critics of the government being subjected to abuses including beating, hooding, mock execution, sleep deprivation and prolonged solitary confinement.

Amnesty International has recorded, in recent years, unnecessary and excessive use of force by the police against peaceful demonstrators, arrests during large demonstrations, arbitrary restrictions on freedom of expression, and discriminatory laws and practices.

In January 2014, Oman ratified the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Security Agreement. While it remains to be seen, its provisions are expected to undermine freedom of expression in the GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates). In August the government decreed a new citizenship law, to take effect in February 2015. It will empower the authorities to strip Omani nationals of their citizenship and associated rights if they are found to belong to a group deemed to uphold principles or beliefs that undermine Oman’s “best interests”, allowing the government to arbitrarily withdraw the nationality of its critics and expel them.

Name: Saeed Jaddad

Gender m/f: m

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