

URGENT ACTION

JAIL SENTENCE OF ACTIVIST INCREASED ON APPEAL
Prominent Saudi Arabian human rights activist Fowzan al-Harbi has been detained again, immediately after being told that his sentence had been increased upon appeal. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Fowzan al-Harbi and his lawyer reported on 19 November to the Criminal Court in the capital, Riyadh after a phone call ordering him to appear in court. The judge told him that his 25 June sentence to seven years in prison had been increased to 10 upon appeal and ordered his immediate arrest.

Fowzan al-Harbi, who had been detained since 26 December 2013, was released two days before the Criminal Court sentenced him to seven years in prison followed by a travel ban of equal duration. He was free pending his appeal but was banned from using social media and socialising with others. He was convicted of offences including “breaking allegiance” to the ruler by calling for protests, criticizing the authorities and participating in the founding of an “unlicensed organization” (understood to be the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association, ACPRA).

Amnesty International has learnt that the judge ordered Fowzan al-Harbi’s immediate arrest at the request of the General Prosecutor, who has accused Fowzan al-Harbi of publishing both his list of charges and the court decision in violation of his pledge on which basis he had been released in June. The authorities have prevented the details of the new verdict from being released or discussed in public.

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

- Calling on the Saudi Arabian authorities to ensure that the conviction and sentence of Fowzan al-Harbi are quashed and release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Urging them to ensure that he has regular access to visits from family and his lawyers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 JANUARY 2015 TO:

King and Prime Minister

King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
 The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
 Office of His Majesty the King
 Royal Court, Riyadh
 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior)
 +966 1 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Justice

Sheikh Dr Mohammed bin Abdul Kareem
 Al-Issa
 Ministry of Justice
 University Street, Riyadh 11137
 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 Fax: +966 1 401 1741
 +966 1 402 0311
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed
 bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
 Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
 Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 Fax: +966 1 403 3125 (please keep
 trying)

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. This is the first update of UA 15/14. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/002/2014/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fowzan al-Harbi, a 36-year-old engineer employed at the King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology and married with two children, is a founding member of ACPRA, an officially unlicensed independent human rights organization that campaigned for the rights of political prisoners and detainees in Saudi Arabia until the authorities ordered its closure in March 2013. Following this order, ACPRA members were targeted one by one in an effort by the authorities to silence human rights defenders and activists in the Kingdom.

Fowzan al-Harbi was first called for interrogation on 11 May 2013, when the Bureau of Investigation and Prosecution began investigating him for his activism. The first session of his trial before the Criminal Court in Riyadh was held on 4 December 2013. He was charged with "inciting disobedience to the ruler by calling for demonstrations", "signing documents that incite public opinion against the authorities", "describing the Saudi Arabian state as a 'police state'", "accusing the judiciary of being incapable of delivering justice", "co-founding an unlicensed organization" (understood to be ACPRA) and "ignoring judicial decisions ordering its dissolution", among other things.

He was detained at the end of his second court hearing on 26 December 2013. The judge ordered his arrest without providing any reasons, despite repeated requests from his lawyer. He was detained in al-Malaz Prison in Riyadh where he had complained to prison officials, and later to the judge, about his conditions of detention. He was forced to sleep in the hallway leading to the prison's mosque because of overcrowding and had to use an old and dirty blanket given to him by a prisoner to protect himself from the cold.

On 23 June 2014 the judge ordered his release but only after Fowzan al-Harbi agreed to sign a pledge not to publish any writings or posts on social media or socialize at all until the sentence was considered final after the appeal. Two days later he was found guilty and sentenced to seven years in prison followed by a travel ban of equal duration. He was also banned from using social media and socialising with others.

The rearrest and harsher sentence of Fowzan al-Harbi are part of an ongoing crackdown on ACPRA members, which has included a series of grossly unfair trial. Mohammed al-Bajadi's secret retrial before the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) on 23 October started just months before he was supposed to be released for serving his four-year sentence. He was presented with a list of charges similar to those for which he had already been tried for, convicted and sentenced. Another ACPRA member, Abdulaziz al-Shubaili, is expected to attend his third court session before the SCC on 14 December. He could be detained at any time.

Name: Fowzan al-Harbi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 15/14 Index: MDE 23/033/2014 Issue Date: 20 November 2014