

URGENT ACTION

QATARI DOCTOR HARASSED IN UAE PRISON

Qatari medical doctor Mahmoud al-Jaidah, who is facing an unfair trial in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has been ill-treated in prison. He is repeatedly strip-searched when he is taken back to prison from court in an apparent attempt to humiliate him and lower his spirits. If convicted, he will have no right to appeal under UAE law.

Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah, who has been on trial at the Federal Supreme Court in Abu Dhabi, UAE, since 4 November 2013, has been harassed by the prison authorities. Amnesty International has been told that when he is taken back to prison after his trial sessions, he is strip-searched and forced to sit naked for some hours before being allowed to enter his cell, in an apparent attempt to humiliate him and lower his spirits. He is being denied privileges granted to other prisoners, including the opportunity to attend Friday prayers in a mosque.

His family, fearing reprisals, have not visited him in prison or attended his latest trial hearing, held on 30 December, since his son, Abdulrahman al-Jaidah, was arrested on 23 December for publicly campaigning for his release. Abdulrahman al-Jaidah was released the next day and escorted on a flight back to Qatar by state security officers after an interrogation by state security.

Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah was arrested on 26 February 2013 and held in solitary confinement in secret detention for almost nine months until after his trial had started. He has said that he was tortured during this time. He has been charged with having ties with al-Islah (Reform and Social Guidance Association), an association legally established in 1974 in the UAE where it has been engaged in peaceful social and political debate. Two members of al-Islah, who were witnesses at his trial sessions on 23 December and 30 December, told the court that they did not know who Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah was and had never had any association with him.

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

- Urging the authorities to release Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah immediately if he has been imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of association;
- Calling on them to investigate allegations of torture and other ill-treatment immediately and impartially and bring those responsible to justice, in accordance with international fair trial standards; and grant Dr al-Jaidah immediate access to his lawyer and family.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 FEBRUARY 2014 TO:

President

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Ministry of Presidential Affairs
Corniche Road
Abu Dhabi, P.O. Box 280
United Arab Emirates
Fax: +971 2 622 2228
Email: ihtimam@mopa.ae

Salutation: Your Highness

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Crown Prince Court Bainunah Street
Abu Dhabi, P.O. Box 124
United Arab Emirates
Fax: +971 2 668 6622
Twitter: @MBZNews

Salutation: Your Highness

And copies to:

Vice-President and Prime Minister
Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid al-Maktoum
Office of the Prime Minister
Dubai, P.O. Box 2838
United Arab Emirates
Fax: + 971 4 353 1974
Email: info@primeminister.ae
Twitter: @HShkMohd

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 301/13. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE25/010/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah was arrested by plainclothes UAE security officials while in transit at Dubai International Airport on 26 February 2013. He was held in solitary confinement in secret detention for almost nine months until after his trial began. He has said that he was subjected to torture including beatings, sleep-deprivation and constant bright light, and was forced to drink a liquid without knowing what it was. He was also denied access to his lawyer until his trial began and his lawyer has been unable to obtain his case files.

Amnesty International wrote to the UAE authorities in April 2013 seeking information about Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah and expressing concern over his fate, but has yet to receive a response.

Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah's son, Abdulrahman al-Jaidah was attending his father's hearing on 23 December 2013 when an officer approached and asked him to come outside the courtroom. When he left the courtroom, the men tried to handcuff him without an arrest warrant and they got into a scuffle. Fearing that he would be arrested and taken into secret detention, Abdulrahman al-Jaidah tried to run back into the courtroom to alert the judge, but the men stopped him. They took him outside, handcuffed him, put a bag over his head and drove him in a van to an unknown location where he was interrogated about his campaigning for his father. He was denied access to a lawyer, even after asking for one. His family were not aware of what had happened to him until they left the courtroom during a break in the trial session. In the early hours of 24 December 2013, Abdulrahman al-Jaidah, accompanied by three state security officers, was taken to Abu Dhabi airport where he was placed on a private flight to Qatar. He was only released after security officials took his fingerprints, scanned his irises and forced him to sign a document, part of which said that he apologized for "talking badly about the UAE". Amnesty International believes that Abdulrahman al-Jaidah may have been arrested because he has been publicly campaigning on his father's case, drawing attention to his father's prolonged detention without charge and alleged torture. The campaigning has included a video interview with him posted on YouTube on 14 November.

Dozens of people associated with al-Islah have been imprisoned in recent years. On 4 March 2013, 94 people, including lawyers, judges, academics and student leaders, some of whom were linked to al-Islah, went on trial on vaguely-worded national security charges in connection with their alleged membership of the association. On 2 July 2013, of the 94 who faced a mass trial, which began on 4 March, 69 were convicted and sentenced to between seven and 15 years in prison, while 25 were acquitted. The proceedings in the trial, which became known as the "UAE 94" trial, violated international fair trial standards: the defendants were denied legal assistance while they were detained incommunicado awaiting trial; all were held in secret detention, some for up to a year; many have alleged they were tortured; "confessions" purportedly obtained while defendants were in secret detention were used as evidence of their guilt; and all were denied the right to appeal the court's verdict.

Under Article 67 of Federal Law No.10, Concerning the Supreme Federal Court, the decisions of the Court are final and binding, meaning that individuals tried in this Court do not have the right under UAE law to appeal the verdict against them.

Under international human rights law, everyone convicted of a criminal offence has the right to have the conviction and sentence reviewed by a higher tribunal. The right to review ensures that there will be at least two levels of judicial scrutiny of a case, the second of which is by a higher tribunal than the first.

Name: Mahmood al-Jaidah, Abdulrahman al-Jaidah
Gender m/f: both m

Further information on UA: 301/13 Index: MDE 25/002/2014 Issue Date: 10 January 2014