

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 22/001/2005

15 March 2005

UA 63/05 Fear for safety

QATAR Hamda Fahad Jassem Al-Thani (f), aged 28

Hamda Fahad Jassem Ali Al-Thani, a member of Qatar's ruling family, is being forcibly held at her family's home in the capital Doha. Her father's disapproval of her choice of husband has reportedly led to her being detained by members of the security forces for a year, and her current confinement to the family home. She is said to have been beaten by her family and is not allowed access to the outside world. Amnesty International is concerned for her safety.

Hamda Al-Thani married Sayed Mohammed Sayed Saleh, an Egyptian national, in Egypt on 5 November 2002. Nine days later, she was allegedly drugged and abducted by members of the Qatari security forces, who took her back to Qatar. According to reports, she was detained in secret in the al-Selyea area of Doha for five months until April 2003, and then transferred to the offices of the state's Special Security Directorate in Doha, where she was detained until November 2003. The security forces reportedly then handed her over to the custody of her family, who have held her against her will at their home since then. She is apparently confined to one room and is not permitted access to lawyers, doctors or visitors of any kind. Her family has reportedly beaten her on several occasions.

Amnesty International brought Hamda Al-Thani's case to the attention of the Qatari authorities on 3 September 2004, and on 22 February 2005 wrote to the Amir of Qatar, the State's ruler and a cousin of Hamda Al-Thani, expressing grave concern regarding her continued confinement. To date, no response has been received. Hamda Al-Thani's husband has apparently contacted many authorities in Qatar including the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, an institution in charge of women's affairs, in an effort to draw the attention of the authorities to her case, but he has not received a response. Amnesty International is concerned that her father has used his power and influence to ensure the complicity of the security forces in detaining Hamda Al-Thani, and has failed to act after the organization brought the case to the attention of the authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Hamda Al-Thani has the right to liberty and security of person and under Article 9 right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention; Article 16 states that men and women of full age have the right to marry. As a member state of the UN, Qatar has pledged under the Charter of the UN to promote observance of and respect for human rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Hamda Al-Thani, who is being forcibly detained at her family's home in Doha, with no access to lawyers, doctors or any visitors;
- calling for the authorities to take immediate steps to intervene to end Hamda Al-Thani's forcible confinement and ill-treatment by her family in collusion with members of the security forces, and to ensure her future safety;
- calling on the authorities to investigate reports that the Qatari security forces were responsible for abducting her, detaining her and handing her over to her family's custody;
- calling for Hamda Al-Thani to be granted the right to seek justice and challenge her forcible confinement through the Qatari legal system;

- urging the authorities, in compliance with their obligations as a UN member state, to protect, and enable Hamda Al-Thani to exercise, her right to liberty and security of person and her right not to be subjected to arbitrary detention.

APPEALS TO:

His Highness Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar
PO Box 923
Doha, Qatar

Fax: + 974 436 12 12 (It may be difficult to get through; please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Highness

His Highness Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al-Thani
Prime Minister and Minister of Interior
PO Box 115
Doha, Qatar

Fax: + 974 432 7734/ 432 3339 (It may be difficult to get through; please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Highness

COPIES TO:

His Excellency Shaikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr al-Thani
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 250
Doha
State of Qatar

Fax: + 974 438 3745/ 429 454 (It may be difficult to get through; please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Hassan bin Abdullah Al-Ghanem
Minister of Justice
PO Box 917
Doha, Qatar

Fax: + 974 483 28 68

and to diplomatic representatives of Qatar accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 April 2005.