URGENT ACTION

BROTHER HELD AFTER ACTIVIST FLEES COUNTRY

Omani national, Mahmoud al-Fazari, has been held without charge since 22 July after his brother fled the country while under a travel ban. He is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Mahmoud bin Khalfan bin Salem al-Fazari, aged 22, was arrested on 22 July after being summoned to the police Special Section (al-Qism al-Khas) in the Qurum area of the capital, Muscat, for questioning about his brother, Mohammed al-Fazari, who had fled the country.

After he was arrested, Mahmoud al-Fazari was transferred to Ruwi police station, also in Muscat, and managed to let his family know that he was detained there. His father was allowed one brief meeting with him on 24 July, and saw bruises on his body. During the visit, police officers threatened his father, saying that if his son did not confess to helping his brother flee the country, then other members of their family, including female members, would be summoned to the Special Section for questioning. Mahmoud al-Fazari was returned to the Qurum Special Section, where he is still detained without charge.

Mohammed al-Fazari, a human rights activist and blogger, left Oman for the United Kingdom, arriving on 17 July. He travelled from Oman despite having had his passport and identification card confiscated and having been under a travel ban by the Omani authorities since December 2014. He had been previously detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights.

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

- Calling on the Omani authorities to release Mahmoud al-Fazari immediately and unconditionally or else charge him with an internationally recognizable criminal offence and try him promptly in proceedings that meet international standards for fair trial;
- Urging them to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and is immediately granted access to his family, lawyer and any medical attention he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 SEPTEMBER 2015 TO:

Minister of Interior
Hamoud bin Faisal bin Said Al Busaidi
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127
Ruwi 112
Muscat
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: + 968 24797779
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice
Sheikh Abdul Malik al-Khalili
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 354
Ruwi 112
Muscat
Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: info@moj.gov.om
Twitter: @moj_gov
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Chairman, National Human Rights Commission
Mr Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Riyami
PO 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.
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights activist Mohammed bin Khalfan bin Salem al-Fazari, 26, Mahmoud al-Fazari’s brother, is also a blogger and the founder and editor-in-chief of the online independent magazine Muwaten (Citizen) which tackles social issues in Omani society.

He had been arrested in June 2012 along with other activists during a peaceful protest outside the police headquarters in Muscat, calling for the release of detained activists. He is understood to have been held, for the first four days in solitary confinement in a room two metres squared with spotlights constantly beaming on him and the national anthem played continuously, at high volume. He and 10 others were each sentenced on 8 August 2012 to a total of one year’s imprisonment and a fine of 200 Omani riyals (around US$520) on charges including “illegal gathering with the intent of rioting” and “disturbing traffic”, by a Court of First Instance in Muscat. The Appeal court upheld his six-month prison sentence for the first charge and acquitted him of the second on 12 December 2012. Simultaneously Mohammed al-Fazari and others were tried on charges of “insulting the country’s ruler”, as well as “violating the country’s cyber laws”. They were pardoned by Sultan Qaboos bin Sa’id on 21 March 2013 and released the next day.

Mohammed al-Fazari was again detained for five days at the end of December 2013. He was interrogated by members of the Internal Security Services who wanted him to stop his online activities, including on Twitter.

On 31 August 2014 he was summoned to the Special Section of the police headquarters in Muscat and arrested, shortly after commenting in his magazine on a new citizenship law that the government had decreed earlier that month - which provides for the revocation of citizenship of Omani nationals. He was released without charge on 4 September, after six days held incommunicado.

Most recently, on 22 December 2014, Mohammed al-Fazari was again arrested, at Muscat airport, while he was travelling to the United Kingdom. He was released without charge a day later but the authorities confiscated his passport and identification, which they are still holding.

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. Activists and critics of the government have reported being subjected to beatings, hooding, mock executions, sleep deprivation, prolonged solitary confinement and other forms of torture and other ill-treatment.

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

Name: Mahmoud bin Khalfan bin Salem al-Fazari,
Gender m/f: m

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