

URGENT ACTION

SAEED JADDAD REARRESTED, JAILED

Omani human rights activist Saeed Jaddad was arrested on 25 November, after the Appeal Court in Salalah upheld his one-year sentence under the Cyber Crimes Law for a blog he wrote in October 2014. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Omani human rights activist **Saeed Jaddad**, aged 49, was arrested on 25 November and transferred to Arzat Prison, west of Dhofar province's capital, Salalah, after a raid on his home at 1am that morning. The Court of Appeal in Salalah had a week earlier upheld his sentence of one year in prison and a fine of 1000 Omani Rials (about US\$2,600). On 31 March a court of first instance in Salalah had convicted him of "inciting to break national unity and spreading discord within society" in relation to a blog he wrote in October 2014 in which he compared the 2011 protests in Dhofar province to the 2014 protests in Hong Kong.

In a separate case the Appeal Court in Muscat on 9 September had upheld his three years' prison sentence, suspended for three years, and payment of a 2000 Omani Rials fine (about US\$ 5,200). On 8 March, a court of first instance in Muscat had convicted him of "undermining the prestige of the state", "incitement to protest" and "using social media to disseminate information that infringed on the sanctity of public order".

Information about cases and trials in Oman has been increasingly difficult to obtain during 2015. It appears that the authorities have further tightened their grip on freedom of expression and exerted more pressure on activists to give up their work.

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

- Calling on the Omani authorities to release Saeed Jaddad immediately and unconditionally and ensure that his conviction and sentence are quashed, as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that he has regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choice and that he receives any medical care he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 JANUARY 2016 TO:

Minister of Justice

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

Minister of 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. This is the seventh update of UA 318/14. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde20/1516/2015/en/

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Saeed Jaddad has been arrested several times. 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 banned from publishing articles in the national media. He refused to sign a statement renouncing pro-reform and human rights activities, after facing pressure from the authorities to do so.

In August 2013 he was charged with “undermining the status and prestige of the state” after he called for political and social reforms and held meetings with members of the European Parliament. He was arrested at his home in Salalah on 21 January 2015 to face trial on these charges. His trial before a court of first instance began in Muscat on 27 January 2015. He was sentenced on 8 March to three years in prison and a 500 Omani Rial (about US\$1,300) fine for “undermining the prestige of the state”; one year in prison and a fine of 200 Omani Rials (about US\$520) for “incitement to protest”; and three years in prison and a 1,000 Omani Rial (US\$2,600) fine for “using social media to disseminate information that infringed on the sanctity of public order”. The court ordered that Saeed Jaddad should serve the three sentences concurrently and pay the combined fine of 1,700 Omani Rials (US\$4,415). He was released on bail on 7 April and his appeal began on 15 April. On 9 September the Appeal Court in Muscat upheld his three years prison sentence and suspended it for three years.

In the meantime he had been arrested at his home on 10 December 2014, in relation to a blog he wrote in October in which he compared the 2011 protests in Dhofar province to the 2014 protests in Hong Kong. Officials 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 made repeated inquiries, but the authorities told them nothing. Amnesty International has information that he had been held and interrogated in the same room for at least five days without being allowed to contact his family or a lawyer. On around the fifth day his interrogators put pressure on him to sign documents that accused him of crimes including “harming the country and violating its laws” and “contacting foreign bodies”. He refused to do this or answer the Prosecutor’s questions without a lawyer present. His detention was then extended by seven days. He was transferred to Taqah prison (about 40km east of Salalah) where Amnesty International understands that he shared a cell infested with cockroaches and other insects with at least 22 other detainees, and slept on the floor. About four days later he was taken again to the Prosecutor’s office where he again refused to answer questions without his lawyer present. On the morning of 22 December 2014 he was released on bail of US\$1,200 and his son’s passport was confiscated as a guarantee. The first hearing of this case took place in his absence in Salalah on 27 January 2015.

Amnesty International documented instances of prolonged arbitrary and incommunicado detention in Oman in 2013 and 2014. The organization also received reports of cases of torture and other ill-treatment by state security officials during detention. 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 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: Saeed Jaddad
Gender m/f: m