

URGENT ACTION

LOUJAIN AL-HATHLOUL CONDITIONALLY RELEASED

On 10 February, woman human rights defender Loujain al-Hathloul was conditionally released after being sentenced in December 2020 to a prison term of five years and eight months following a deeply unfair trial. She was convicted of charges related to her women's rights work. She has appealed the sentence. Loujain al-Hathloul continues to be on probation for two years and 10 months, partially suspended from her sentence, and faces a five-year travel ban. Amnesty International calls on the authorities to ensure her sentence is quashed, and effectively investigate her claims of torture in detention.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Twitter: @KingSalman*

Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud,

*On 10 February, Saudi woman human rights defender **Loujain al-Hathloul** was conditionally released from prison after being sentenced by the Specialized Criminal Court in December 2020 to five years and eight months in prison, with partial suspension of two years and 10 months, including the time she has already served in detention since May 2018. She was convicted of trumped-up charges related to her peaceful human rights work, including "spying with foreign parties" and "conspiring against the kingdom" for promoting women's rights and calling for the end of the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia.*

Loujain al-Hathloul was arrested in May 2018 and was detained without charge or trial from 17 May 2018 until 13 March 2019, when she appeared for her first court session. She was subjected to lengthy spells in solitary confinement throughout her detention. For the first three months of detention, Loujain al-Hathloul endured torture, sexual abuse and other ill-treatment when she was held incommunicado and in solitary confinement with no access to her family or lawyer.

Even though she is now outside prison, Loujain al-Hathloul is not free yet. She continues to face probation, which means she faces the risk of re-imprisonment - conditional release and a travel ban of five years. In addition, she continues to be denied access to justice and accountability for her allegations of being tortured and harassed in prison during the first three months of her detention.

I urge you to ensure that Loujain al-Hathloul's conviction and sentence are quashed as she was detained and tried solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression. I also urge you to ensure Loujain al-Hathloul's freedom of movement and travel by lifting the ban imposed on her for the coming five years, as well as removing the travel ban on her parents. Furthermore, I call on you to ensure an impartial, effective investigation into the reports of Loujain al-Hathloul being tortured, harassed and ill-treated in prison, that she receives full reparation, and that those suspected of responsibility are prosecuted in fair trials with no possibility of the death penalty. Finally, I urge you to ensure Loujain al-Hathloul's safety and protection from threats, harassment and any kind of punitive measures, to enable her to safely continue her human rights work without intimidation or fear of prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 13 March 2019, Loujain al-Hathloul was among 11 women's rights activists brought to trial before the Criminal Court in Riyadh. The court session was closed, and diplomats and journalists were banned from attending. Several women activists faced charges of contacting foreign media, other activists and international organizations including Amnesty International. Some of them were also accused of "promoting women's rights" and "calling for the end of the male guardianship system."

The trial of several women human rights defenders (WHRDs) arrested between May and July 2018 resumed in 2020 and resulted in a number of prison sentences being handed down following unfair trials. After months of delays and prolonged detention without their trials proceeding, in November 2020 **Loujain al-Hathloul, Samar Badawi, Nassima al-Sada, Nouf Abdelaziz** and **Mayaa al-Zahrani**, were brought before the Criminal Court in Riyadh in separate trial sessions. Loujain al-Hathloul's case was transferred to the Specialised Criminal Court (SCC) in December 2020 after the Criminal Court concluded that it was "outside its jurisdiction". The SCC specializes in trying terrorism-related cases and should not be trying and sentencing peaceful activists.

The Saudi Arabian authorities continue to arbitrarily detain without charges and try individuals for their peaceful expression and human rights work. Amongst those are: [Mohammed al-Bajadi](#), founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA) and prominent human rights defender who has been detained without charges or trial since May 2018; and [Salman al-Awda](#), a reformist cleric who faces a death sentence for his peaceful expression.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Arabic

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 15 APRIL 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Loujain al-Hathloul (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/3648/2021/en/>