

URGENT ACTION

JORDANIAN MAN AND SON RELEASED

Abd al-Rahman Fanatsa and his son Da'oud were released on bail on 8 January 2013 after nearly two months in detention in Jordan. However, they still face charges stemming from peacefully protesting fuel subsidy cuts.

Their case was recently transferred from the State Security Court (SSC) to a criminal court. They have not received a summons to attend a court hearing.

Abd al-Rahman Fanatsa and his sons **Da'oud Fanatsa** and **Hamza Fanatsa** were arrested on 19 November 2012 from their farm in Ma'an in southern Jordan by Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Gendarmerie (Darak) officers and said that they were tortured in police custody. Hamza Fanatsa was released without charge on 20 November. Abd al-Rahman Fanatsa suffers from schizophrenia; while in detention he was given an alternative to his usual medication for his condition which apparently led him to experience severe headaches.

They were arrested following widespread protests throughout Jordan against government plans to cut fuel subsidies. Hundreds were arrested and many were held solely for peacefully calling for reforms to be implemented effectively, including by a change of government. Sixty-seven people interviewed by the official National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) said they were arrested not at protests but in front of their homes, at work, or when they happened to be in the vicinity of a protest.

A Royal Decree issued by King Abdullah on 10 December 2012 ordered the release of 116 detainees held since the protests. But it appears that those released still face charges. Amnesty International is concerned that most if not all these people were held as prisoners of conscience solely for exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression.

No further action is requested from the UA network at this time. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor these cases.

This is the second update of UA 357/12. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE16/005/2012/en>



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The authorities arrested around 300 people following widespread protests against the proposed fuel subsidy cuts during November 2012. Many were held solely for peacefully participating in protests. Dozens were beaten at the protests and in police detention, and were denied immediate access to legal representation, relatives and medical treatment as required. The NCHR said that the Public Security Directorate had acknowledged that 50 children were arrested in connection with the protests, 12 of whom appeared before the SSC prosecutor and were released on bail days after their arrests. One lawyer told Amnesty International that at least nine children released on 19 November 2012 reportedly made statements to the police without the presence of a lawyer, parent or other appropriate adult.

The protests took place throughout the country, particularly in Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Salt, Tafileh and Ma'an. The authorities say they arrested people for carrying out criminal offences during demonstrations, including damaging and destroying private and public property and calling for "regime change". While individuals at some demonstrations apparently carried out violent acts, which in some instances resulted in damage or destruction of private and public buildings, Jordanian activists and lawyers say that security forces, some in plain clothes violently dispersed many peaceful demonstrations, firing tear gas and beating protesters. Reformist activists told Amnesty International that protests in Tafileh and Amman, for example, began peacefully and only turned violent when security forces dispersed protesters with tear gas and arrested many participants. One civilian and two police officers were killed in the context of the protests.

According to lawyers, activists and NGOs, police and other security forces at times used unnecessary or excessive force to quell the protests. Tens of those detained were beaten in police detention, were denied immediate access to a lawyer of their choice, family members and any medical treatment they required. For example, Adnan al-Howeish was detained on 17 November after he participated in a peaceful demonstration in Zeiban, northern Jordan on 16 November. He suffered a serious injury to his left eye resulting in a cut in the centre of the eye with the eyeball protruding from the socket after he was hit with a stone during the protest during which – according to witnesses - masked government supporters threw stones at the protesters. Following an appeal by the NCHR, he was allowed surgery on 18 November to repair the cut and restore the eyeball to its original position. His doctor recommended treatment for his eye injury in a centre specializing in eye injuries. He was finally released on bail on 19 December charged under Article 149 of the Penal Code with "activities aimed at changing the political system", carrying a sentence of up to 15 years, and for participating in a protest with the aim of "disrupting public order", carrying a sentence of up to three years. His family's requests for him to see eye specialists during his detention for urgent treatment appeared to go unheeded and he may have lost the sight in his left eye.

Read more at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE16/003/2012/en>.

Name: Abd al-Rahman Fanatsa, Daoud Fanatsa, Hamza Fanatsa

Gender: m

Further information on UA: 357/12 Index: MDE 16/001/2013 Issue Date: 12 April 2013