

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 20/001/2002

UA 196/02 Fear for safety/Fear of Torture

27 June 2002

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OMANDr Faiza Alani (f), Australian national

Australian national, Dr Faiza Alani has been held at the Seeb police station in the capital Muscat since 26 June. She is reportedly being denied food, water and toilet facilities. She has not been charged and has been denied access to lawyers. Her passport was confiscated by the police in July 2001 and she has previously been held in incommunicado detention and ill-treated.

Dr Faiza Alani is reportedly currently suing an Omani national, who claimed to be a representative of the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). She had responded to an advertisement in a local Australian newspaper requesting academics to teach at a new university in the UAE at the end of 1999. She was interviewed and hired in Australia, but was reportedly told shortly before she was due to fly out, that the university building was not completed. She would have to teach in Oman for a short period until it was ready.

She agreed to teach at a college in the town of Rustaq, north of Muscat, but later found out that she had been deceived. The Omani national reportedly received a commission from the Omani Ministry of Higher Education for every foreign teacher he brought to the country and there was never a job for Dr Alani in the UAE. He also occasionally withheld the allowances she was entitled to. Following failed complaints to the Omani Ministry of Education, Dr Alani decided to sue the man who had hired her in Australia.

Following this, the police in Rustaq began to pressurize her into dropping the case. In July 2001, she was stopped and had her belongings, including her passport and handbag, confiscated. She was said to have been taken to an unknown location and kept there for several hours during which she was attacked before being released. She was unable to return to Australia as her passport was confiscated and found herself without a job as she was fired from the college, without being told why.

On 8 May 2002, Dr Alani filed a case with an administrative court against the police. Two hearings have taken place so far. The last one was held on 24 June and was adjourned until October. When she left the court, the police asked her to go the Seeb police station in Muscat, where she has been held since the morning of 26 June.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Dr Faiza Alani;
- calling for her to be given food, water, toilet facilities and to be allowed access to lawyers;
- urging the authorities to guarantee that she will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- asking the authorities to clarify why she is being held at Seeb police station;
- calling for her to be charged with a criminally recognizable offence or immediately and unconditional released;
- expressing concern at her alleged harassment by the police;
- urging that a prompt and impartial investigation into allegations of her ill-treatment in July 2001 be carried out and that anyone responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO: (please note that fax numbers can be difficult to reach)

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Zaher al-Hinai
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
PO Box 354, Muscat 112
Sultanate of Oman

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Fax: + 968 602 725

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Sa'ud bin Brahim al-Busa'idi
Minister of Interior, Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127, Ruwi 112
Sultanate of Oman

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Fax: + 968 693 330/602 244

Salutation: Your Excellency

Sultan of Oman

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
Diwan of the Royal Court
PO Box 632, Muscat 113
Sultanate of Oman

Telegrams: His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Salutation: Your Majesty

COPIES TO: to diplomatic representatives of Oman accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 August 2002.