

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture/incommunicado detention

SAUDI ARABIA

Khaled al-'Omaid (m)
Mohammed al-'Otaibi (m)
Kamil 'Abbas al-Ahmad (m), aged 43
Zuhair al-Janbi (m), aged 26
At least 21 other men

The men named above, and at least 21 others, have been detained after taking part in or attempting to hold protests against Israel's current military action in Gaza. They are held incommunicado, and Amnesty International believes they are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Khaled al-'Omaid and Mohammed al-'Otaibi were arrested on 1 January in al-Naheda street, in the capital, Riyadh, where the protest had been due to take place. It is not known where they are held.

Kamil 'Abbas al-Ahmad, Zuhair al-Janbi and 11 other protestors were arrested on 19 December in the eastern city of al-Qatif. Ten others were arrested on 29 December in connection with a second protest in al-Qatif. The men are held in al-Dhahran police station.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Saudi Arabian authorities regularly hold detainees incommunicado, when they are frequently tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Demonstrations are not allowed in Saudi Arabia. Those who defy this ban are often held incommunicado without charge, denied access to the courts to challenge the legality of their detention, and tortured. Trials fall far short of international standards of fairness: defendants are generally denied legal counsel, and in many cases they and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. Court hearings are often held behind closed doors.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Khaled al-'Omaid, Mohammed al-'Otaibi, Kamil 'Abbas al-Ahmad, Zuhair al-Janbi and at least 21 others are held incommunicado, and are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment;
- urging the authorities to ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment;
- calling on them to ensure that the men are given regular access to their families and lawyers, and any medical attention they may require;
- calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally if they are being held solely for taking part in or attempting to hold peaceful protests.

APPEALS TO:

His Majesty King 'Abdullah Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty The King
Royal Court
Riyadh

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Salutation: Your Majesty

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Minister of the Interior

Ministry of the Interior

P.O. Box 2933

Airport Road

Riyadh 11134

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 403 1185

+966 1 403 3614

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Nasseriya Street

Riyadh 11124

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 403 0645

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

COPIES TO:

Mr Turki bin Khaled Al-Sudairy

The President

The Human Rights Commission

P.O. Box 58889

King Fahad Road

Building No.373

Riyadh 11515

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 4612061

and to diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 February 2009.