

UA 170/98

Fear of ill-treatment / Health concerns / Possible

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SAUDI ARABIA Farzana Kauzar, Pakistani mother aged 33 and her three children:
Mohamed Assad Ijaz, son, aged 3
Fakeyha Ijaz, daughter, aged 6
Mohamed Saad, son, aged 9

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Farzana Kauzar and her three children, Pakistani nationals, who it has recently learned have been in secret detention or under restriction orders in Saudi Arabia for the previous eight months. It is feared they may be at risk of ill-treatment and there is also concern that one of the children, Mohamed Saad, is suffering ill-health.

It is likely that the mother and children are prisoners of conscience and are being held as hostages in order to force the children's father to return to Saudi Arabia where he had been employed since 1981. He is reportedly sought by the authorities in connection with a business dispute between his employer and the Governor of the Eastern Province.

Farzana Kauzar and her children were reportedly arrested on 8 October 1997 at their home in Dahran in the Eastern Province by members of al-Mabahith al-Amma (General Intelligence). The children were apparently then separated from their mother and from each other for interrogation purposes. In December 1997 Mohamed Saad had to be hospitalized for an unknown medical condition. After his release from hospital they were returned to their home but kept under guard for around three weeks before being returned into custody.

The family were said to have been scheduled to travel to Lahore, Pakistan, on 9 October in order to join the father, Ahmed Mohamed Ijaz, also a Pakistani national. He had travelled to Pakistan the previous month.

Farzana Kauzar has made telephone contact with the father only five times since the family's arrest, most recently on 15 February 1998. According to Ahmed Mohamed Ijaz, his wife was not able to provide him with details of their condition but repeatedly urged that he must return to Saudi Arabia.

Farzana Kauzar is not known to have been charged with any recognizably criminal offence or to have had access to a lawyer. It would appear that she and her children are being held solely for their kinship to Ahmed Mohamed Ijaz. Such conduct by an authority amounts to a gross violation of international human rights standards, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Saudi Arabia has acceded.

On 22 May 1998 Amnesty International wrote to the Minister of Interior expressing concern for the family and seeking clarification of their fate and whereabouts and calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they are being held as hostages. No response has been received.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- calling for immediate clarification concerning the status of Farzana Kauzar, and her three children Mohamed Assad Ijaz, Fakeyha Ijaz and Mohamed Saad who's whereabouts have not been known since they were reportedly arrested on 8 October 1997;

- expressing concern for the health condition of Mohamed Saad and urging that he be given the necessary medical attention he requires;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Farzana Kauzar and her children if she is not promptly to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul 'Aziz
Office of H.M. The King
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Salutation: Your Majesty

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COPIES 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 20 July 1998.