

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 23/004/2001

UA 63/01

16 March 2001

Fear of T

SAUDI ARABIA Sheikh Mohammad Ali al-Amri, aged about 90

Sheikh Mohammad Ali al-Amri is reportedly being held incommunicado. The exact reason for his arrest is not known, but appears to be related to his Shi'a religious beliefs. Amnesty International fears that he may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Sheikh Mohammad Ali al-Amri, a Shi'a religious scholar aged about 90, is reportedly detained at the *Mabahith al-Amma*, General Intelligence, in the city of al-Madina al-Munawwarah. He was arrested on 9 March, shortly after some Iranian Shi'a Muslims on pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Saudi Arabia visited him at his home.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Saudi Arabia, members of faiths other than Sunni Islam are not permitted to practice their religions in public, and risk arrest even when they do so in private. Arbitrary arrest and detention of Shi'a Muslims is widespread, and fear of prosecution prevents them from practising their faith freely. Those detained are frequently held without charge, and face torture or ill-treatment. In the rare instances where they are brought to trial, the proceedings invariably fail to meet the most elementary standards of fairness.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in or your own language:

- expressing concern that Sheikh Mohammad Ali al-Amri is being held incommunicado;
- seeking assurances that he is treated humanely, protected from torture or ill-treatment and given prompt and regular access to relatives, lawyers and medical attention;
- requesting information regarding his arrest, including the reason for this and whether he has been charged with a criminal offence;
- expressing concern that he may have been arrested solely for the peaceful expression of his religious beliefs, and, in that case, calling for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience;

APPEALS TO:

King and Prime Minister
The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
His Majesty King Fahd bin'Abdul'Aziz Al-Saud
Office of H.M. The King
Royal Court, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegram: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Salutation:Your Majesty

Minister of Interior
His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin'Abdul'Aziz,
Minister of Interior, Ministry of the Interior,
P.O. Box 2933, Airport Road,
Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegram:Minister of Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Fax:+ 966 1 403 1185

Telex:404416

Salutation:Your Royal Highness

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin'Abdul'Aziz Al-Saud,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street,
Riyadh 111244, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegram:Foreign Affairs Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Fax:+ 966 1 403 0159

Telex:405000

Salutation:Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Dr.'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
University Street,
Riyadh 11137, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegram:Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Fax:+ 966 1 401 1741

Telex:405 980 MINJUS SJ

Salutation:Your Excellency

COPIES TO: 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 29 April 2001.