

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED PROTESTORS REMAIN AT RISK

Khaled al-'Omar and Mohammed al-'Otaibi remain in detention and are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. They were detained in Saudi Arabia after taking part in, or attempting to demonstrate against Israel's military action in Gaza. They appear to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of assembly.

Sources in Saudi Arabia have stated that Khaled al-'Omar and Mohammed al-'Otaibi were charged at around the end of June with participating in a protest. Khaled al-'Omar is reported to have been informed more recently by the prosecution that the charges against him and Mohammed al-'Otaibi have been dropped, but the two men nonetheless continue to be detained at al-Ha'ir Prison in Riyadh.

Khaled al-'Omar and Mohammed al-'Otaibi were arrested on 1 January in al-Naheda Street, in the capital, Riyadh, where a protest against Israel's military action in Gaza had been due to take place.

Kamil 'Abbas al-Ahmad, Zuhair al-Janbi and 11 other protestors who were arrested in connection with this and other similar protests that took place in December 2008 were released without charge or trial in December 2008 and January 2009.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or your own language:

- expressing concern that Khaled al-'Omar, and Mohammed al-'Otaibi remain in detention;
- seeking clarification of the reasons for their detention
- urging the authorities to ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment;
- calling on the authorities 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 ensure that the men are given the opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention;
- 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.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 August 2009 TO:

His Majesty, The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
King 'Abdullah Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
Office of His Majesty the King, Royal Court, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior) +966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of the Interior
His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
Ministry of the Interior
P.O. Box 2933, Airport Road
Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice
His Excellency Shaikh Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-'Issa
Ministry of Justice
University Street
Riyadh 11137
Fax: + 966 1 401 1741
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to: President of the Human Rights Commission Mr Bandar Mohammed Abdullah Al Aiban, P.O. Box 58889, King Fahad Road, Building No. 373, Riyadh 11515, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Fax: +966 1 4612061

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

This is the first update of UA: 14/09 (MDE 23/001/2009)

Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/001/2009/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 or otherwise ill-treated. If and when detainees are brought to trial, the proceedings generally fall far short of international fair trial standards: in many cases, defendants are denied legal counsel; court hearings are held behind closed doors; and defendants and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them.

Further information UA: 14/09 Index: MDE 23/023/2009 Issue Date: 08 July 2009

