

PUBLIC

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19 December 2008

UA 349/08 Health concern

SAUDI ARABIA Amir Hussain (m), Bangladeshi national, aged about 35

Dead: Haas Muhammad Muzamdar (m), Bangladeshi national, aged 26

Amir Hussain, a Bangladeshi national detained in the al-Shumaisi deportation centre in the Saudi Arabian capital, Riyadh, is believed to be denied access to medical care for a serious health problem. Amnesty International's concerns are heightened by reports that another Bangladeshi national, Haas Muhammad Muzamdar, a 26-year-old computer engineer, died in the same deportation centre in the early hours of 19 December after apparently also being denied medical care.

According to sources in Saudi Arabia, Amir Hussain is seriously ill, although the nature of his health problem is not known to Amnesty International. He is said to have briefly lost consciousness on 19 December. His fellow inmates alerted the guards at the deportation centre, but they reportedly did not permit him to have medical care.

The exact reasons for his arrest and pending deportation are not known to Amnesty International but he was said to have had a valid passport and residency permit. He is detained in Wing No. 3 of the al-Shumaisi deportation centre, along with some 500 other foreign nationals.

Haas Muhammad Muzamdar was reportedly suffering from chest pains before he died. The day before his death he complained to guards at the centre about his pains, but they apparently reacted by saying it was better for him to die. Though the guards then said that they would get help, he apparently received no medical care. Haas Muhammad Muzamdar had been held at the al-Shumaisi deportation centre for 23 days, and was believed to have been in good health when he arrived there.

In October, Amnesty International received reports that two inmates at the centre, known only as Shams al-Haq and Malik, had died. They had apparently been suffering from health problems, but were reportedly not granted access to medical facilities even though their conditions were made known to the authorities. Amnesty International has also received several reports suggesting that detainees are given meals, consisting of paltry amounts of food, only twice a day. Detainees who protested at the quantities of food were said to have been beaten by guards as punishment. Amnesty International wrote to the Saudi Arabian Interior Minister in November, calling for an investigation into the treatment of detainees at the al-Shumaisi deportation centre. The Saudi Arabian authorities have not yet responded.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The detainees held at the al-Shumaisi deportation centre can be held for up to seven months before they are repatriated to their countries. In many cases they are held there despite being in possession of valid passports and airline tickets. They have no opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention.

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

- calling on the Saudi Arabian authorities to provide Amir Hussain and other detainees in al-Shumaisi deportation centre with all necessary medical treatment;

- calling on the authorities to open a prompt and impartial investigation into allegations that three men have died at the al-Shumaisi deportation centre since October 2008 after being denied adequate medical attention, including Haas Muhammad Muzamdar, who reportedly died on 19 December;
- calling on the authorities to investigate reports that guards at the centre have repeatedly failed to allow inmates to have access to appropriate medical care, and to hold those responsible accountable;
- urging the authorities to investigate reports that detainees who complain about the quantity of food rations in the centre have been beaten and to hold accountable anyone found responsible for such ill-treatment;
- urging the authorities to comply with international human rights standards such as the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, which state that "medical care and treatment shall be provided whenever necessary" for detainees;
- calling on the authorities to allow detainees to challenge the legality of their detention, and to give them adequate access to lawyers and consular assistance.

His Majesty King 'Abdullah Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques

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Salutation: Your Royal Highness

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

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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 30 January 2009.