

# URGENT ACTION

## 10 EGYPTIAN NUBIAN MEN SENTENCED TO PRISON

On 10 October, the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, sentenced 10 Egyptian Nubian men to prison terms ranging between 10 to 18 years following a grossly unfair trial for organizing a peaceful remembrance event. They were charged with establishing an association without a license, showing solidarity with the Muslim Brotherhood and posting on social media. Some of the men are elderly and suffer from health conditions, such as diabetes and cardiovascular issues. The Saudi authorities must immediately and unconditionally release the 10 Egyptian Nubian men, quash their sentences, and drop all charges brought against them. Pending their release, the Saudi authorities must ensure that they have full access to medical care, their lawyers and family members.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud*  
*Office of His Majesty the King*  
*Royal Court, Riyadh*  
*Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*  
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*Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,*

*I am alarmed to learn that **10 Egyptian Nubian men** were sentenced to prison terms ranging between 10 to 18 years by the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in the capital Riyadh on 10 October. According to one of the men's relatives, they were sentenced under Articles 34, 43, and 44 of Saudi Arabia's Counter-Terrorism Law on charges of establishing an association without a license, showing solidarity with the Muslim Brotherhood and posting on social media. The families of the 10 men were prevented from attending the sentencing hearing. According to one of the men's relatives, some of them are older and suffer from health problems, such as diabetes and cardiovascular issues.*

*On 14 July 2020, the 10 men were arrested by the Saudi General Directorate of Investigation (al-Mabahith) in relation to a cultural event they had planned on 25 October 2019 to mark the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. They were detained incommunicado with no access to their lawyers or family members for the first two months of their detention. The 10 men attended their first hearing before the SCC on 10 November 2021, where they met their lawyer for the first time in almost 16 months. At the second hearing, which took place on 24 January 2022, the defence statement included allegations that the confessions provided by the men were extracted under coercion. The prosecution objected to this paragraph and the judge ordered the defence lawyer to amend it.*

***I urge you to release all ten men immediately as they are detained solely for peacefully exercising their human rights. Pending their release, I call on you to ensure that they have full access to medical care, lawyers of their choice and regular contact with their families. Furthermore, I urge you to protect minorities of all ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities, and grant them their basic human rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and association in Saudi Arabia.***

*Yours sincerely,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 10 men were first arrested on the morning of an event they had planned on 25 October 2019 to mark the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, where they were interrogated by Saudi security officials who accused them of failing to include a photo of Egyptian President General Abdelfattah al-Sisi in the event's announcement poster, alongside other Egyptian army generals. On 25 December, the men were released on travel ban pending the case's resumption. The event has taken place in previous years in Saudi Arabia without any reprisals against the community.

The ten detained Egyptian Nubian men are: **Adel Ibrahim Faqir** (Head of the Nubian community in Riyadh) **Dr. Farjallah Ahmed Youssef** (Former Head of the Nubian community in Riyadh), **Jamal Abdullah Masri** (President of Dhamit Nubian Village Association in Riyadh), **Mohamed Fathallah Gomaa**, **Sayyed Hashem Shater**, **Ali Gomaa Ali Bahr**, **Saleh Gomaa Ahmed**, **Abdulsalam Gomaa Ali Bahr**, **Abdullah Gomaa Ali** and **Wael Ahmed Hassan Ishaq** (member of Thomas Nubian Village Association).

The SCC sentenced Mohammad Fathallah Gomaa to 18 years in prison, Dr. Farjallah Ahmed Youssef to 17 years, Adel Ibrahim Faqir to 14 years, and Sayyed Hashem Shater to 14 years. Six other men received sentences ranging between 10 to 16 years in prison.

The Nubians are a minority ethnic group in Egypt and Sudan and have been historically marginalized and discriminated against on the basis of their cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identity. In 1964, the Egyptian government forcibly displaced thousands of Nubians from their homes in southern Egypt, to build the Aswan High Dam which caused the flooding of several Nubian villages and further displacement. The displaced Nubian population resettled in other areas, and many migrated to the Arab Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, seeking work. To preserve their culture and heritage, the Nubian diaspora established Nubian cultural and social associations. For decades, Nubian associations have operated normally in Saudi Arabia, focusing strictly on cultural and social activities away from politics.

Since the early 2000s, Nubian activists' demands for the return to their ancestral land and compensation accelerated. Article 236 of the 2014 Egyptian Constitution stipulated for the first time the implementation of a comprehensive development plan for marginalized areas including Nubia, with participation of local communities, with the view of preserving their heritage. To that end, a coalition of 40 Nubian associations was formed in Riyadh in early 2020 to call on Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to abide by Article 236 and allow the Nubians' return to their homeland.

In 2017, the Egyptian authorities arrested 25 Nubian activists after the police violently dispersed their peaceful protest in Aswan governorate on 3 September 2017. They were later released and all charges against them dropped, noting that [Gamal Sorour](#), one of the activists, died in custody. Amnesty International documented the continued harassment of Nubian rights activists by the National Security Agency (NSA) including through summons for coercive questioning without judicial orders in 2021.

In addition, the SCC routinely conducts trials that have been assessed as being grossly unfair and leading to harsh sentences including prison sentences up to 34 years to be followed by equally long travel bans, and going up to the death penalty, and has routinely been used as a tool to [repress dissidents](#).

### PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English and Arabic

You can also write in your own language.

### PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 9 December 2022

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Adel Ibrahim Faqir, Dr. Farjallah Ahmed Youssef, Jamal Abdullah Masri, Mohamed Fathallah Gomaa, Sayyed Hashem Shater, Ali Gomaa Ali Bahr, Saleh Gomaa Ahmed, Abdulsalam Gomaa Ali Bahr, Abdullah Gomaa Ali and Wael Ahmed Hassan Ishaq (**All men - he/his/him**)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/4967/2021/en/>