

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST FACES FRESH TRIAL

Prisoner of conscience Mohammed al-Bajadi is being retried on the same charges for which he was sentenced to a four-year prison term in 2012. This retrial, months before his expected release, may well result in a harsher sentence.

Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi, one of the founders of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), was brought to the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Riyadh for retrial on 23 October 2014. He was presented with the same charges for which he is serving a four-year sentence. He has been charged with offences including participating in the founding of an unlicensed organization, harming the image of the state through the media, calling on the families of political detainees to protest and hold sit-ins, contesting the independence of the judiciary and having banned books in his possession.

Mohammed al-Bajadi is being retried months before his expected release after serving his four-year sentence. He was sentenced by the SCC in a secret trial on 10 April 2012 to four years in prison and a five-year travel ban. He had been denied legal representation ever since he was detained, on 21 March 2011.

The SCC's appeal division had rejected the sentence handed down by the court's first instance division, without telling Mohammed al-Bajadi or his legal representative, and sent the case back to the same court for retrial. He only learnt about his retrial when he was called to the first instance division of the court to attend his first hearing in August 2013. He refused to appear in court without his lawyer, who was finally allowed to attend over a year later, in October 2014. The trial sessions have remained closed to members of the public.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to ensure that Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi's conviction is quashed, all charges against him are dropped and he is released immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience held solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly;
- Urging them to ensure he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, given immediate and regular access to his family and lawyer of his choice and any medical attention he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 JANUARY 2015 TO:

King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior)
+966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of the Interior
His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed
bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice
His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin
Abdulkareem Al-Issa
Ministry of Justice
University Street
Riyadh 11137
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 401 1741
+966 11 402 0311

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fifth update of UA 91/11. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/030/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mohammed al-Bajadi is held in al-Ha'ir Prison in Riyadh, where he has gone on hunger strike on several occasions in protest at the violations he has suffered. As a result his health has worsened significantly. A 36-year-old businessman and father of two, he is one of the founders of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). Founded in 2009, ACPRA reported on human rights violations and helped many families of detainees held without charge to bring cases against the Ministry of Interior before the Board of Grievances, an administrative court with jurisdiction to consider complaints against the state and its public services

He was previously arrested on 4 September 2007, apparently in connection with his human rights activities, but later released. He has also exposed violations inside Saudi Arabian prisons and detention centres: in December 2010, he documented and reported the torture and extrajudicial execution of a Yemeni man in the Tarafiyah detention centre in the city of Qasim.

Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi was arrested in Burayda, in the province of Qasim, on 21 March 2011, the day after he had taken part in a protest by families of detainees outside the Ministry of Interior in Riyadh. He was taken to his house by uniformed agents and masked men in civilian clothes, who are believed to have been members of the Interior Ministry's General Investigation Department. According to local sources the men confiscated books, documents and laptop computers and then took him to his office where they confiscated more books, documents and computers; they filmed the inside of his house and office during these raids.

Throughout his detention, mainly at al-Ha'ir Prison in Riyadh, Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi's legal defence team were denied access to him and told that their right to represent him was not recognized by the court. They were not allowed to attend hearings, which began in August 2011, despite waiting outside the court for hours. The hearing at which he was sentenced was attended by uniformed soldiers, as well as a representative of the governmental National Human Rights Commission. However, neither his family nor his legal representatives were told that the hearing would take place.

Although the charge sheet and the sentence have not been made public, leaked letters in his handwriting said that on 10 April 2012 the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh, which was set up to deal with terrorism and security-related cases, sentenced him to four years' imprisonment followed by a five-year travel ban. He was found guilty of participating in the establishment of a human rights organization, harming the image of the state through the media, calling on the families of political detainees to protest and hold sit-ins, contesting the independence of the judiciary and having banned books in his possession.

Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi was held incommunicado for almost 10 months, most of which he spent in solitary confinement. He went on hunger strike several times, in protest at being detained. He was intravenously force-fed for seven months, despite repeated objections and complaints of stomach pain and he did not receive adequate medical attention.

He was released without notice or explanation on 6 August 2013 to allow him to spend the week of Eid al-Fitr (marking the end of Ramadan) with his family. At the end of the week he was rearrested without explanation. Shortly after that he learned that the court of appeal had sent his case back to the SCC and he was to face a retrial.

Name: Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi

Gender m/f: m