

# URGENT ACTION

## JAILED EGYPTIAN PHYSICIAN MUST BE RELEASED

On 23 May, the Supreme Court in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, upheld the 10-year prison sentence of Egyptian national and physician Dr. Sabri Shalaby. The Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) sentenced him to 10 years in prison on trumped up terrorism-related charges following a grossly unfair trial. He was held in solitary confinement for the first ten months of his detention and in incommunicado detention for three months during this period. Amnesty International urges the Saudi Arabian authorities to release Dr. Sabri Shalaby immediately. Pending his release, he must be granted immediate access to adequate medical care.

**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

Phone: +966 11 488 2222

Fax: +961 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)

Twitter: @KingSalman

Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,

I am writing to express concern about the ongoing arbitrary detention of **Dr. Sabri Shalaby**, an Egyptian national and physician, who is serving a 10-year prison term on trumped up terrorism charges. In August 2022, the Specialized Criminal Court convicted Dr. Shalaby following a grossly unfair trial. The Supreme Court in Riyadh upheld the prison sentence of Dr. Shalaby on 23 May 2023, meaning that he has exhausted all his legal remedies.

According to information available to Amnesty International, Dr. Shalaby was convicted under the counter-terror law for supporting and joining the Muslim Brotherhood, which is classified as a terrorist organization in Saudi Arabia. Amnesty International found no evidence supporting these charges. Dr. Shalaby said that he was detained in solitary confinement for ten months prior to his trial beginning. Throughout this period, he was detained incommunicado for three months. He was also denied legal representation from the moment of his arrest until his first trial session. The Saudi Arabian authorities have not launched an investigation into his alleged ill-treatment or denial of due process rights.

Furthermore, Dr. Shalaby has on numerous occasions asked the prison administration to see a neurologist to follow up on health complications arising from an old spinal cord surgery he had undergone. His request continues to be denied. He also has asthma and cataracts due to other underlying health conditions for which he has not received adequate care.

**I call on Your Majesty to ensure that Dr. Sabri Shalaby is released immediately, and that his conviction and sentence are quashed. Pending his release, we urge you to grant Dr. Sabri Shalaby the adequate medical care he requires.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr. Sabri Shalaby is a physician who worked in Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Health between 2006 and 2019. In 2017, he filed a lawsuit before the Administrative Court in Tabuk for financial compensation after realizing that he was registered with a lower job title than his actual one for the past ten years. In 2019, the court ruled in his favor, ordering the Ministry of Health to pay out his owed financial dues retroactively. However, the Ministry appealed the ruling, terminated his contract and issued an exit visa for Dr. Shalaby.

Prior to the appeals session, security officers who identified themselves as members of the General Directorate of Investigations (GDI) in Tabuk, a city in north-western Saudi Arabia, arrested Dr. Shalaby from his home on 28 January 2020. They did not disclose the reason for arrest and told him that he is only being taken for a brief questioning. They thoroughly searched the entire house and confiscated his medical books, laptop, mobile phones and USB sticks. Dr. Sabry's family said that the officials did not present an arrest or search warrant.

Dr. Shalaby was detained in Abha prison in the south-western region for the first 2 and a half years of his detention, then taken to Dhahban Prison near Jeddah where he continues to be held.

His trial began before the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in February 2021 for charges relating to his alleged support for the Muslim Brotherhood. He was tried in a trial of 8 people, the majority of whom he said he did not know and has never met. The SCC initially sentenced him to 20 years in prison, to be followed by deportation from Saudi Arabia. Upon appeal, the sentence was reduced to 10 years. According to information available to Amnesty International, the prosecution presented no material evidence related to his alleged support for the Muslim Brotherhood, which Saudi Arabia has designated a terrorism organisation and relied on testimonies of two others being tried with him in addition to a confirmation from the Egyptian National Security Agency that Dr. Shalaby is supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood.

During Dr. Shalaby's first two interrogation sessions, he said he was questioned about his political affiliation and his relation to other individuals being tried with him. The court never provided Dr. Shalaby with the evidence which was used to convict him of his support of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Amnesty International has documented the [Saudi Arabian authorities' use of the Specialized Criminal Court \(SCC\) since 2011 to systematically silence and punish dissent](#), concluding that SCC judges have presided over grossly unfair trials, handing down prison sentences of up to 30 years and numerous death sentences under vague provisions of the counter-terror and anti-cybercrime laws.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic, English.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 15 September 2023**

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

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Dr. Sabri Shalaby (he/him)