

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 23/001/2004

09 January 2004

Further Information on UA 301/03 (MDE 23/009/2003, 24 October 2003) and follow-ups (MDE 23/011/2003, 13 November 2003 and MDE 23/013/2003, 20 November 2003) - Possible prisoner of conscience/Torture and ill-treatment/Incommunicado detention/Medical concern

SAUDI ARABIA

**Jam'an al-Ghamdi (m) aged 37, Saudi Arabian national and at least 1 other protestor in Riyadh
7 protestors in Jeddah**

Released:

**Um Sa'ud (f) aged 60
Ahmad bin Sa'd bin Abdel Aziz al-Amhuj (m) aged 37
At least 82 others**

According to reports, Jam'an al-Ghamdi and at least one other person are still being held at a prison in Riyadh. It is not known why they are being held, though they were arrested following a protest in the *al-U'laya* district of Riyadh on 14 October 2003.

Seven other men, who were detained in Jeddah following later protests on 23 October 2003, remain in detention. They were sentenced to various prison terms of between one and three months by a court, which also ordered that they receive at least 50 lashes.

Um Sa'ud, Ahmad bin Sa'd bin Abdel Aziz al-Amhuj, and at least 82 other detainees who were arrested following the protest in Riyadh have reportedly been released from prison. Um Sa'ud and two other women are known to have been amongst at least 30 people who were released from *al-Malaz* prison in Riyadh at 8 am on 17 December 2003. They had been imprisoned for 55 days and according to the Minister of Interior, promised "not to do it again".

Amnesty International fears that all those detained in connection with the demonstrations may be held solely for their non-violent expression of their politically held beliefs and as such may be possible prisoners of conscience. The protestors were calling for political reform and the release of political prisoners. Over 250 people were arrested following both protest demonstrations. Many were released after interrogation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Anti-government demonstrations are not allowed in Saudi Arabia. Critics of the state are often at risk of indefinite detention without charge or trial. They are also often ill-treated or tortured. Defendants do not have the right to formal representation by a lawyer and in many cases they and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. Due to the secrecy of the Saudi Arabian justice system, trials are often held behind closed doors. In the rare instances when individuals are charged and brought to trial, the proceedings invariably fail to meet the most elementary standards of fairness.

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

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained in connection with the demonstrations on the 14 and 23 October 2003 if they are held solely for demonstrating peacefully;
- asking the authorities to ensure that all detainees are protected from torture and ill-treatment and given regular access to family lawyers and medical attention if necessary;
- calling for anyone charged with a recognizably criminal offence to be given a prompt and fair trial.

APPEALS TO:**Minister of the Interior**

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin >Abdul >Aziz,
Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior
P.O. Box 2933, Airport Road,
Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegram: Minister of Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Fax: + 966 1 403 1185 (it may be difficult to get through, please keep trying)
Telex: 404416
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin >Abdul >Aziz Al-Saud,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Nasseriya Street,
Riyadh 11124, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegram: Foreign Affairs Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Fax: + 966 1 403 0159 (it may be difficult to get through, please keep trying)
Telex: 405000
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Dr. >Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
University Street,
Riyadh 11137, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegram: Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Fax: + 966 1 401 1741
Telex: 405 980 MINJUS SJ
Salutation: Your Excellency

King and Prime Minister**The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines**

His Majesty King Fahd bin >Abdul >Aziz Al-Saud,
Office of H.M. The King, Royal Court,
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegram: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Salutation: Your Majesty

COPIES 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 20 February 2004.