

Appeal Leaflets (2)

AI Index: MDE 23/04/00

Saudi Arabia

Hani al-Sayegh

Deported, detained, denied basic rights

Every day people in Saudi Arabia suffer violations of their basic human rights. Their suffering is perpetuated and hidden by a system based on secrecy and fear, and is largely ignored by the world's governments.

Anyone who dares voice dissent is likely to be imprisoned. Women face systemic discrimination. Anyone not in a position of influence is at risk of arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly members of religious minorities and those deemed to have broken the country's strict moral codes.

People are arrested with little or no explanation. They are denied access to a lawyer. They are tortured and ill-treated. They are convicted after secret and summary trials, sometimes solely on the basis of confessions extracted under duress. They face punishments including execution, amputation and flogging and in all cases have no meaningful right of appeal.

The Saudi Arabian government refuses to allow outside scrutiny of its human rights record and has ignored Amnesty International's many requests for information, constructive dialogue or implementation of reforms that would protect human rights.

Amnesty International is stepping up the pressure. It is issuing a series of documents to highlight the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia and to demand action from the authorities and the international community to put an end to the secrecy and suffering in Saudi Arabia. Please join us!

Your help is needed.

Hani al-Sayegh, a Saudi Arabian, fled to the USA to seek asylum. On 10 October 1999 he was forcibly returned home, two days after the US authorities stated that he "was not entitled to remain in this country and that his removal to Saudi Arabia was appropriate". On his arrival in Saudi Arabia he was detained. He was initially held incommunicado. After 10 days his wife and his two young children were informed of his whereabouts and were allowed to visit him in the presence of security officers.

Hani al-Sayegh continues to be held in al-Ha'ir Prison in Riyadh in connection with the bombing of a US military complex at al-Khobar in June 1996 which left 19 US servicemen dead. He has not been granted access to a lawyer. He has no opportunity to challenge the legality of his detention.

Before his deportation the US authorities stated that they had received assurances from the Saudi Arabian government that Hani al-Sayegh would not be tortured, but they did not specify what these assurances were or how they conformed to safeguards required by the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Amnesty International believes that Hani al-Sayegh is currently at risk of torture and that he may be sentenced to death after a secret and summary trial.

The government of Saudi Arabia has given no indication that Hani al-Sayegh's trial will not be held behind closed doors as is common practice. It has not said when the trial will start, or whether international observers will be allowed to attend. It has ignored requests for visas submitted by Amnesty International delegates who were hoping to attend the trial. Given the serious structural defects of the criminal justice system in Saudi Arabia, Amnesty International fears that he may face execution by beheading after an unfair trial.

What you can do

Please write, calling for clarification of the legal status of Hani al-Sayegh. If he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence, he should be released. If he is charged he should be granted

immediate access to a lawyer and a fair trial in accordance with international standards. Send your letters to:

His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul 'Aziz,
Office of H.M. The King,
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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