

PUBLIC

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UA 81/08

Incommunicado Detention/ Fear of Torture

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|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| SAUDI ARABIA | Muhammad Mahdi Khalil (m), engineer aged about 30 |] | |
| | Sayyid Ahmad 'Alawi (m), teacher, aged about 28 |] | |
| | Majeed al-Ghasra (m), teacher, aged about 30 |] | |
| | Muhammad 'Abdullah al-Mu'man (m), teacher, aged about 28 |] | Bahraini nationals |
| | 'Abbas Ahmad Ibrahim (m), teacher, aged about 31 |] | |
| | 'Isa 'Abdul-Hassan Ahmad (m), teacher, aged about 26 |] | |
| | Muhammad Hassan 'Ali Marhoun (m), teacher, aged about 30 |] | |
| | Ibrahim Marzam al-Haddad (m), teacher, aged about 28 |] | |

The eight Bahraini nationals named above have been held incommunicado since their arrest a month ago, and are at risk of torture and other ill treatment.

According to information received by Amnesty International, all eight men travelled in two cars to the Saudi Arabian capital, Riyadh, for a short holiday and were arrested by Saudi Arabian security forces at a checkpoint when they arrived there on 28 February. Their families have had no contact with them since their arrest. The Bahrain authorities are reported to have asked for clarification of the reasons for their arrest, but are yet to receive a response from the Saudi Arabian authorities or to be granted consular access to them in detention. Some reports suggest that the arrest of the eight men may be connected to a laptop computer that was in their possession. However, they continue to be detained without charge.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Saudi Arabian authorities regularly hold detainees incommunicado, when they are frequently tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Critics of the state are subject to gross violations of their rights at the hands of various security forces under the control of the Ministry of Interior. They are often held incommunicado without charge or trial, denied access to lawyers and the courts to challenge the legality of their detention, and tortured. Trials fall far short of international standards for fair trial: defendants are generally denied legal counsel, and in many cases they and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. Court hearings are often held behind closed doors.

The Saudi Arabian authorities have carried out thousands of arrests and detentions of government critics and opponents in the name of the "war on terror", many of whom have been detained for long periods without charge or trial. In a statement in 2007 the Ministry of Interior announced that there were at least 3,000 alleged political opponents then being held without charge or trial. The Ministry is also reported to have disclosed that they detained 9,000 people between 2003 and 2007 as part of the "war on terror".

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that the eight men (naming them) are protected from torture and other ill treatment;
- calling on the authorities to disclose their current whereabouts and allow them immediate and regular access to lawyers, families, diplomatic representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- calling for all eight to be brought to trial promptly and fairly on recognisable criminal charges or else released.

APPEALS TO:

Please note that you may experience difficulties sending faxes on Thursdays and Fridays, which is the weekend in Saudi Arabia.

His Majesty 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 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
P.O. Box 2933
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

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
Fax: +966 1 403 0645
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

COPIES TO:

Mr Turki bin Khaled Al-Sudairy
President
Human Rights Commission
PO Box 58889, Riyadh 11515
King Fahad Road, Building No.373
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 4612061

and 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 9 May 2008.