

URGENT ACTION

SAEED JADDAD SENTENCED TO JAIL AND FINE

Omani prisoner of conscience Saeed Jaddad was sentenced on 31 March to one year in prison and a fine. He had been charged under Oman's Cyber Crimes Law. He is also serving a three-year sentence on charges related to his calls for political and social reforms.

Saeed Jaddad, a 48-year-old Omani human rights activist, appeared before the court of first Instance in Salalah, the capital of Dhofar province, on 17 March, on a charge "relating to Oman's Cyber Crimes Law". He was sentenced on 31 March to one year in prison and fined 1,000 Omani Rials (US\$2,600). Although Saeed Jaddad was not brought to court to hear the sentence, the judge pronounced the verdict saying that he was doing so in Saeed Jaddad's presence. Saeed Jaddad's family paid the fine. His lawyer immediately lodged an appeal and requested that he be released on bail but the judge refused to do so.

A court of first instance in the capital, Muscat, had sentenced Saeed Jaddad on 8 March in another case to three years in prison and a fine of 1,700 Omani Rials (US\$4,415), for "undermining the prestige of the state", "incitement to protest" and "using social media to disseminate information that infringed on the sanctity of public order". Saeed Jaddad has appealed and paid bail of 2,000 Omani Rials (US\$5,200). A day later he was transferred to a prison in Salalah and he stopped his hunger strike.

He is now serving a total of four years' imprisonment in two separate cases.

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

- Calling on the Omani authorities to release Saeed Jaddad immediately and unconditionally and ensure that his convictions and sentences are quashed as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that he receives any medical attention he may require, and has access to his family and a lawyer of his choice;
- Urging them to repeal all legislation that criminalizes the right to freedom of expression, and respect and protect this right.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 MAY 2015 TO:

Head of State and Prime Minister

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id
Diwan of the Royal Court
The Palace, Muscat 113
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: +968 24 735 375
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Hamoud bin Faisal bin
Said Al Busaidi
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127, Ruwi 112, Muscat
Sultanate of Oman
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Chairman, National Human Rights
Commission
Mr Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Riyami
P.O. Box 29, Postal Code: 103
Bareq A' Shati
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Fax: +968 24 648 801

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 318/14. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde20/1189/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Saeed Jaddad was sentenced on 8 March to three years in prison and a 500 Omani Rial (US\$1,300) fine for “undermining the prestige of the state”; one year in prison and a fine of 200 Omani Rials (US\$520) for “incitement to protest”; three years in prison and a 1,000 Omani Rial (US\$2,600) fine for “using social media to disseminate information that infringed on the sanctity of public order”. The court ordered that Saeed Jaddad should serve the sentences concurrently and pay the combined fine of 1,700 Omani Rials (US\$4,415).

Saeed Jaddad has previously been arrested on several occasions. He was arrested on 14 January 2013 and held for six months, including eight days in solitary confinement. He was released at the end of June 2013 but banned from publishing articles in the national media and the authorities tried to pressure him into signing a statement renouncing pro-reform and human rights activities.

In August 2013 he faced charges of “undermining the status and prestige of the state” after he called for political and social reforms, and held meetings with members of the European Parliament. His first hearing took place in Muscat on 27 January 2015.

The authorities told Saeed Jaddad in July 2014 that a travel ban had been imposed on him and on 31 October they prevented him from travelling abroad.

Before his latest arrest, Saeed Jaddad was last arrested on 10 December 2014, when officials searched his home and confiscated his phone and computers. They did not tell his family why they were arresting him or where they were taking him. His family repeatedly sought information about his whereabouts but the authorities told them nothing. He is understood to have been held and interrogated in the same room for at least five days without being allowed to contact his family or a lawyer. On around the fifth day of his detention his interrogators tried to force him to sign documents accusing him of crimes including “harming the country and violating its laws” and “contacting foreign bodies”. He refused to do this or answer the Prosecutor’s questions without a lawyer present. His detention was then extended by seven days. He was transferred to Taqah prison (about 40km east of Salalah) where he is understood to have shared a cell infested with cockroaches and other insects with at least 22 common law detainees, and slept on the floor. About four days later he was taken again to the Prosecutor’s office where he again refused to answer questions without his lawyer present. On the morning of 22 December he was released on bail of US\$1,200 and his son’s passport was confiscated as a guarantee. The first hearing of this case took place in Salalah in his absence on 27 January.

Amnesty International documented instances of prolonged arbitrary and incommunicado detention in Oman in 2013 and 2014. Cases of torture and other ill-treatment by state security officials during detention were also reported. Activists and critics of the government have reported being subjected to beatings, hooding, mock executions, sleep deprivation, prolonged solitary confinement and other forms of torture and other ill-treatment.

Amnesty International has recorded, in recent years, unnecessary and excessive use of force by the police against peaceful demonstrators, arbitrary arrests during large demonstrations, arbitrary restrictions on freedom of expression, and discriminatory laws and practices.

Name: Saeed Jaddad

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 318/14 Index: MDE 20/1357/2015 Issue Date: 31 March 2015