

URGENT ACTION

PROTESTERS RELEASED

Around 15 men detained in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital, during a protest held on 16 December have been released. Around 12 were set free without charge after they were reportedly made to sign pledges that they would not participate in protests in the future. The remaining three were released after being tried and sentenced to suspended prison terms of up to five months.

The men were among dozens of protesters, both men and women, who were arrested on 16 December as they gathered at al-Rajih mosque in Riyadh to protest the continued detention of relatives who have been held for years on security-related grounds without charge or trial. Many were released on the same day as they were arrested, or the day after, including all the women.

Amnesty International has learnt that most of the around 15 men who were kept for a longer period in detention were released without charge within about a week of their arrest, reportedly after they were made to sign pledges that they would not participate in protests again.

The remaining three detainees – **Saad al-Rashud** and **Abdul Hakim al-Rashud**, both aged 19, and **Badr al-Sakkar** – were transferred to al-Malaz prison on Sunday 25 December 2011. Nearly two weeks later, they were reportedly informed by guards in prison that they would be tried before the Criminal Court in Riyadh. On 18 January 2012 they were convicted of “disobeying the ruler” following a trial in which they were reportedly not allowed any legal assistance. The court handed down suspended prison sentences of four months to Saad and Abdul Hakim al-Rashud and of five months to Badr al-Sakkar. All three were released on 23 January 2012, reportedly after being made to sign pledges that they would not protest again.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 371/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/mde23/031/2011>

Name: Saad al-Rashud, Abdul Hakim al-Rashud, Badr al-Sakkar and around 15 other men

Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 371/11 Index: MDE 23/005/2012 Issue Date: 5 March 2012

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