EXTERNAL (for general distribution) **AI Index: MDE 23/04/94**
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UA 333/94 **Fear of torture ill-treatment** **9 September 1994**

SAUDI ARABIA **Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed**
Dr Muhsin al-'Awaji

Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhsin al-'Awaji who were both arrested by *al-Mabahith al-'Amma* (General Intelligence) on 8 September 1994 and taken to an unknown location. It is feared that they may be subjected to ill-treatment or torture while being held in incommunicado detention.

Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed, a writer and a lecturer at Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh, was one of the six founding members of *Lajnat al-Difa' 'an al-Huquq al-Shar'iyya* (Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights-CDLR) in Saudi Arabia. In 1993 both Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhsin al-'Awaji were arrested and detained; during that time Dr al-Hamed was tortured and deprived of sleep for long periods. Both men were released after agreeing to sign a statement agreeing to forgo any political activities seen to be hostile to the Kingdom. After his release Dr al-Hamed wrote a long poem describing the period he spent in prison. Amnesty International believes that Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhsin al-'Awaji are prisoners of conscience arrested solely for the peaceful expression of their political beliefs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The CDLR was founded in Riyadh on 3 May by six prominent Saudi Arabian religious scholars and professionals, among them Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed. In a statement the group announced its aims to be the "alleviation of injustice....and the defence of legitimate rights decided by the *Sharia* (Islamic law)" On 11 May the Council of Senior *'Ulama* (religious scholars), the highest religious authority in Saudi Arabia, issued a statement expressing surprise at the establishment of such an organization, stating that Saudi Arabia had no need for human rights organizations since it was ruled in accordance with the *Shari'a.* The activities of the banned group were suspended for a few months before the CDLR relaunched its activities from London in April 1994.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English, Arabic or your own language:

- seeking assurances that both Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhsin al-'Awaji are being treated humanely and urging that they be allowed access to family members, defence counsel and doctors;
- urging that Dr 'Abdullah al-Hamed and Dr Muhsin al-'Awaji be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO

His Royal Highness
Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
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Telegrams: Minister of the Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
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Salutation: Your Royal Highness

His Royal Highness
Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz
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Salutation: Your Royal Highness

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 October 21 1994.