

# URGENT ACTION

## SAUDI PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE RE-ARRESTED

**Prisoner of conscience Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady was re-arrested eight days after his release. He is reported to again be on hunger strike. Amnesty International fears he is at risk of ill-treatment as experienced during previous hunger strikes.**

**Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady** was released without notice or explanation from al-Ha'ir prison on 6 August. He had not completed his prison term, but was apparently freed to allow him to spend the week of Eid al-Fitr (marking the end of Ramadan) with his family. At the end of the week he was told by the authorities to finalize some paperwork at the prison. Soon after reaching the facility, a family member and two activists who had accompanied him were told to leave and given no further details. Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady later called and told them he was being re-detained without explanation. His family have not been able to speak to him, but he has communicated to them indirectly, informing them that he has started a new hunger strike in protest against his arbitrary arrest and the conditions of his detention.

Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady was previously held incommunicado for almost 10 months, most of which he spent in solitary confinement. His family were finally allowed to visit him in July and reported that he had significantly lost weight. He was intravenously force-fed for seven months, despite repeated objections and complaints of stomach pain and he did not receive adequate medical attention. Amnesty International believes that he is at risk of ill-treatment, as experienced during his previous hunger strikes.

Mohammed al-Bajady is one of the founders of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). He was sentenced in April 2012 to four years' imprisonment followed by a five-year travel ban. Activists believe the reason for his continued detention is his reporting of human rights violations in detention centres in Saudi Arabia and the help he has given to many families of detainees held without charge to bring cases against the Ministry of Interior.

### **Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language**

- Calling on the authorities to overturn **Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady's** conviction and immediately and unconditionally release him as he is a prisoner of conscience held solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Urging them to ensure he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, given immediate and regular access to his family and lawyer of his choice and any medical attention he may need;
- Urging them to refrain from taking any punitive measures against him as a punishment for his hunger strike.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 OCTOBER 2013 TO:**

#### King of Saudi Arabia

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 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)

**Salutation: Your Majesty**

#### Minister of Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed  
bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud  
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,  
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Fax: +966 11 403 3125 (please keep  
trying)

**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Minister of Justice

His Excellency Shaykh Dr Mohammed  
bin Abdulkareem Al-Issa  
Ministry of Justice, University Street  
Riyadh 11137, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Fax: + 966 11 401 1741  
+ 966 11 402 0311

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 91/11. Further information:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/025/2013/en>

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the end of 2012 the Saudi Arabian authorities have unleashed a widespread campaign of persecution of human rights defenders, both through the courts and through arbitrary measures. The authorities have singled out activists who have used the judiciary to seek redress for violations by the Interior Ministry and security forces, or those who have criticized state institutions for shortcomings. Members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), set up in October 2009, have borne the brunt of the authorities' repression. ACPRA has reported on human rights violations and helped many families of detainees held without charge to bring cases against the Ministry of Interior before the Board of Grievances, an administrative court with jurisdiction to consider complaints against the state and its public services.

Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady, one of the co-founders of ACPRA, has been arbitrarily detained and held incommunicado without charge on various occasions since 2007 for helping families of detainees. Over the past decade, in the name of security and counter-terrorism, the authorities have detained without charge or trial numbers of people believed to be in the thousands. Some were released within days, others were charged with vague security charges and tried secretly in special courts, and some have gone missing in what amounts to enforced disappearance. Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady has also exposed violations inside Saudi Arabian prisons and detention centres: in December 2010, he documented and reported the torture and extrajudicial execution of a Yemeni man in the Tarafiyah detention centre in the city of Qasim.

Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady was arrested in Burayda, in the province of Qasim, on the afternoon of 21 March 2011, the day after he had taken part in a protest by families of detainees outside the Ministry of Interior. He was taken to his house by uniformed agents and masked men in civilian clothes, who are believed to have been members of the Interior Ministry's General Investigation Department. According to local sources the men confiscated books, documents and laptop computers and then took him to his office where they confiscated more books, documents and computers; they filmed the inside of his house and office during these raids.

Throughout his detention, mainly at al-Ha'ir prison in Riyadh, Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady's legal defence team were denied access to him and told that their right to represent him was not recognized by the court. They were not allowed to attend hearings, which began in August 2011, despite standing outside the court for hours. The hearing at which he was sentenced was attended by uniformed soldiers, as well as a representative of the governmental National Human Rights Commission. However, neither his family nor his legal representatives were told that the hearing would take place.

Although the charge sheet and the sentence have not been made public, leaked letters in his handwriting said that on 10 April 2012 the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh, which was set up to deal with terrorism and security-related cases, sentenced him to four years' imprisonment followed by a five-year travel ban. He was found guilty of participating in the establishment of a human rights organization, harming the image of the state through the media, calling on the families of political detainees to protest and hold sit-ins, contesting the independence of the judiciary and having banned books in his possession.

Since his sentence, two of his three-member defence team (Dr Mohammad al-Qahtani and Dr Abdulkareem al-Khoder) have themselves been convicted of similar charges and sentenced to 11 and eight years in prison respectively, followed by travel bans, in March and June 2013. The other member of the team, Fowzan al-Harbi, is under investigation. Dr al-Qahtani's lawyer, Abdulaziz al-Hussan, was forced to leave the country after he was interrogated within hours of writing on Twitter about his client's detention conditions. Dr al-Khoder's lawyer, Abdulaziz al-Shubaily, is also under investigation for insulting a security officer on the day al-Khoder was sentenced. All are co-founders and active members of ACPRA.

Name: Mohammed Saleh al-Bajady

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 91/11 Index: MDE 23/030/2013 Date: 13 September 2013