

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/koweit-popular-blogger-charged-with-05-09-2014,46898.html>

---

Middle East/North Africa - Kuwait

Arbitrary arrest

## Popular blogger charged with blasphemy

5 September 2014

---

Blogger and human rights activist Mohammed Al-Ajmi was freed pending trial yesterday after being held for a week

Reporters Without Borders deplores last week's arrest of well-known Kuwaiti human rights activist and blogger **Mohammed Al-Ajmi** in connection with a tweet and calls for the withdrawal of the [blasphemy charges](#) brought against him. Better known by the [blog name](#) of Abo3asam, he was released the day before yesterday pending trial.

"Prosecuting this netizen over a tweet is absurd," Reporters Without Borders assistant research director Virginie Dangles said. "The regime has again resumed its political of cracking down on outspoken dissidents."

In the controversial [tweet](#), which he posted on his Twitter account on 11 August, Ajmi [criticized](#) the Salafist group Al-Jamiya and accused its members of blindly following its religious leader, Hamad al-Uthman. He posted the tweet in response to the government's decision to [strip the Muslim preacher Nabil Al-Awadi of his Kuwaiti citizenship](#).

As part of a growing crackdown, the government adopted a decree in July that allows it to withdraw Kuwaiti citizenship from any naturalized Kuwaiti who is deemed to pose a threat to national security and public order. [Media owner Ahmed-Al Shemmari](#) and [ten other people](#), including the Muslim preacher Nabil Al-Awadi have been stripped of their citizenship.

Ajmi, who is a [member](#) of the National Committee for Monitoring Violations, was arrested on 27 August after been [summoned and questioned](#) at length by the Al-Samiya region's Criminal Investigation Department. Officials ordered him held for an initial period of 10 days pending investigation.

However, Ajmi is well known on social networks and has [more than 115,000 followers on Twitter](#), and by 29 August, the "freedom for Abo Asam" hashtag ([#الحرية\\_أبو\\_عسم](#)) had been used more than 8,000 times.

The next day, Ajmi began a [hunger strike](#) in protest against his arbitrary arrest. And on 31 August, activists and sympathizers [demonstrated](#) outside the national assembly on Irada Square to demand his release and the release of other detained activists.

This is by no means his first run-in with the authorities and he had already been arrested twice this year. The first time was in April, when he was accused of defaming Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Sabah al-Sabah, before finally being [acquitted](#). The second time was on [6 July](#), when he was held for a few hours for reporting human rights violations during a demonstration.

---