

URGENT ACTION

RAIF BADAWI FLOGGED IN VICIOUS ACT OF CRUELTY

Saudi Arabian activist Raif Badawi was publicly flogged on 9 January in front of the al-Jafali mosque in Jeddah. He is at risk of receiving the remaining 950 lashes over the coming weeks.

Raif Badawi received his first set of 50 lashes on 9 January. According to a witness, he was removed from a bus in shackles and brought to the public square in front of the mosque after the prayers ended. Surrounded by a crowd made up of the public and a number of security officers, he received 50 consecutive lashes on his back and legs. The whole ordeal lasted around 15 minutes. Afterwards he was put back in the bus and taken away.

It is feared that Raif Badawi will receive his next set of lashes within two weeks. According to the final court decision, he will be receiving no more than 50 lashes per session, with a break of no less than a week between sessions. Flogging violates the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment in international law.

Raif Badawi was sentenced by the Criminal Court in Jeddah on 7 May 2014 to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes, followed by a 10-year travel ban, a ban on using media outlets, and a fine of one million Saudi Arabian riyals (about US\$266,600). The conviction and sentence stemmed from Raif Badawi's creation of the Saudi Arabian Liberals website (which the court ordered to be closed) and the accusation that he had "insulted Islam". The Court of Appeal in Jeddah upheld the sentence on 1 September.

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

- Expressing profound disturbance at the flogging of Raif Badawi, which is a flagrant violation of the prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment in international law;
- Calling on the authorities to put a stop to any further flogging of Raif Badawi;
- Calling on them to release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that his conviction and sentence are quashed.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 FEBRUARY 2015 TO:

King and Prime Minister

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 the 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 Excellency

And copies to:

President, Human Rights Commission
Bandar Mohammed 'Abdullah al-Aiban
Human Rights Commission
PO Box 58889, Riyadh 11515
King Fahad Road
Building No.373, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 461 2061
Email: hrc@haq-ksa.org (please keep
trying)

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 seventh update of UA 3/13. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/001/2015/en>

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Raif Badawi's trial began in July 2012 before the General Court in Jeddah. On 21 January 2013, the General Court sent the case to the Criminal Court in Jeddah, saying it did not have jurisdiction to examine the case because it did not find that Raif Badawi had insulted Islam and therefore an "apostasy" charge did not apply. The General Prosecutor, however, insisted that Raif Badawi should be tried for "apostasy". The case was then sent to an appeal court to determine whether it should be heard by the Criminal Court in Jeddah or another tribunal, in particular the General Court in Jeddah, which has jurisdiction over "apostasy" cases. The Court of Appeal in Jeddah referred the case to the Criminal Court and on 29 July 2013 Raif Badawi was sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes. His lawyer appealed the decision arguing that the case had been dealt with by a temporary judge who was not impartial. On 11 December 2013 the Court of Appeal ruled that the case should be reviewed again and sent it back before the Criminal Court in Jeddah. On 25 December 2013, the judge in the Criminal Court ruled that he did not have jurisdiction to review the case, arguing that the charges related to "apostasy". The case was sent back to the Court of Appeal in Jeddah to decide whether to send the case back to the Criminal Court or to examine it itself. The Court of Appeal sent the case back to Jeddah's Criminal Court which sentenced Raif Badawi on 7 May 2014 to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a fine of 1 million Saudi Arabian riyals (about US\$266,600). Raif Badawi appealed, but on 1 September the Court of Appeal upheld the sentence.

The Saudi Arabian authorities have continued their widespread campaign to persecute civil society activists and human rights defenders with complete impunity, using both the courts and extrajudicial means such as the imposition of travel bans. On 6 July 2014, Raif Badawi's lawyer, prominent human rights defender Waleed Abu al-Khair, was sentenced by the Specialized Criminal Court to 15 years in prison to be followed by a 15-year travel ban. He was found guilty of "disobeying the ruler and seeking to remove his legitimacy", "insulting the judiciary and questioning the integrity of judges", "setting up an unlicensed organization", "harming the reputation of the state by communicating with international organizations" and "preparing, storing and sending information that harms public order". He was initially arrested on 15 April after appearing at the fifth hearing of his trial before the Specialized Criminal Court in the capital, Riyadh. Before that Waleed Abu al-Khair was sentenced to three months' imprisonment by the Criminal Court in Jeddah and had his sentence upheld on 6 February 2014 by the Court of Appeal in Mecca on similar charges (see UA 98/14, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/016/2014/en>).

Name: Raif Badawi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA:3/13 Index: MDE 23/002/2015 Issue Date: 9 January