

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST REMAINS IN JAIL

A prominent Saudi Arabian human rights activist, Fowzan al-Harbi, who is on trial for his human rights activism has been arbitrarily detained since 26 December 2013. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience.

Fowzan al-Harbi a 36-year-old father of two, was arrested on 26 December 2013 at the end of his second hearing before the Criminal Court in the capital, Riyadh. The judge ordered his arrest without providing any reason, despite repeated requests from al-Harbi's lawyer. Fowzan al-Harbi is a founding member of the human rights NGO Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), most of whose founders were imprisoned in 2013 on similar charges.

Fowzan al-Harbi had been under investigation since 11 May 2013 at the Bureau of Investigation and Prosecution. His trial started on 4 December and he has been charged with offences including "inciting disobedience to the ruler by calling for demonstrations", "signing documents that incite public opinion against the authorities", "describing the Saudi Arabian state as a 'police state'", "accusing the judiciary of being incapable of delivering justice", "co-founding an unlicensed organization" (understood to be ACPRA) and "ignoring judicial decisions ordering its dissolution".

Fowzan al-Harbi has complained of the bad prison conditions as he has been forced to sleep in the hallway leading to the prison's mosque because of overcrowding and was given an old and dirty blanket by a prisoner to protect himself from the cold. He is held at al-Malaz prison in Riyadh.

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

- Calling on the authorities to release Fowzan al-Harbi immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Urging them to ensure that he is protected from torture or other ill-treatment and given immediate access to any medical attention he may require;
- Calling on them to drop all charges against him stemming from his peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 MARCH 2014 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 1 403 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 1 403 3125 (please keep
trying)

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

And copies to:

Minister of Justice

Sheikh Dr Mohammed bin Abdul Kareem
Al-Issa
Ministry of Justice
University Street, Riyadh 11137
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 401 1741
+966 1 402 0311

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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Saudi Arabian authorities have continued to prosecute human rights defenders with total impunity, and have taken arbitrary measures, such as the imposition of travel bans. Members of ACPRA, set up in October 2009, have received 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.

Two ACPRA co-founders, Dr Abdullah al-Hamid, and Mohammad al-Qahtani, were sentenced on 9 March 2013 to 10 and 11 years' imprisonment respectively, to be followed by travel bans of equal duration. They were convicted of a list of offences among them "breaking allegiance to and disobeying the ruler", "questioning the integrity of officials", "seeking to disrupt security and inciting disorder by calling for demonstrations", "disseminating false information to foreign groups", "violating Article 6 of the information technology law" and "forming an unlicensed organization" (understood to be ACPRA) (see further information on UA 257/12, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/010/2013/en>). The court also ordered the disbanding of ACPRA, confiscation of its property and the closure of its social media accounts.

Another founding member of ACPRA, Dr Abdulkareem al-Khoder, a professor of Islamic jurisprudence, was also convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison and a 10-year travel ban on similar charges on 24 June 2013 (see UA 167/13, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/022/2013/en>). Another ACPRA member, 22-year-old Omar al-Sa'id, was sentenced on 12 December 2013 by a criminal court in Burayda to four years in prison and 300 lashes. He was also handed a four-year travel ban to be enforced after he has served his sentence. His charges were similar to those faced by other ACPRA members (see public statement, 19 December 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/036/2013/en>).

Two other members of ACPRA, Issa al-Hamid and Abdulaziz al-Shubaily, have been summoned several times for questioning about their peaceful activism, by the General Bureau of Investigation and Prosecution. Issa al-Hamid (brother of Dr Abdullah al-Hamid) is being investigated for "stirring public opinion" and "founding and acting as president of an unlicensed organization". Abdulaziz al-Shubaily, another co-founder and current vice-president of ACPRA, has been under investigation since 11 May 2013, facing similar charges to his colleagues. It is feared that both men will soon be tried and imprisoned.

A number of other independent human rights groups and activists have also been harassed by the Saudi Arabian authorities. Waleed Abu al-Khair, a prominent human rights defender and the head of Saudi Arabian Monitor for Human Rights, was sentenced on 29 October 2013 to three months in prison by the Criminal Court in Jeddah after being convicted of "ridiculing the Saudi Arabian judicial system". He is facing another case before the Specialised Criminal Court on charges related to his peaceful activism. Six prominent reformists, including Dr Suliaman al-Rashhudi and Dr Saud al-Hashimi, have been serving lengthy prison terms since late 2012 after they circulated a petition calling for political reform and discussed a proposal to establish an independent human rights organization (see UA 107/13, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/014/2013/en>).

Name: Fowzan al-Harbi

Gender m/f: m