

URGENT ACTION

BADAWI SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS' JAIL, FLOGGING

Website founder Raif Badawi has been sentenced to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a fine. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Raif Badawi was sentenced on 7 May by the Criminal Court in Jeddah to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a fine of 1 million Saudi Arabian riyals (about US\$266,630) for creating and managing the Saudi Arabian Liberals website and insulting Islam.

The same court had convicted Raif Badawi on 29 July 2013 of offences including violating Saudi Arabia's information technology law and insulting religious authorities through his online writing and hosting writing by others on his website. He was sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes. The judge also ordered that the online forum be shut down. However, this sentence was overturned on appeal and the Court of Appeal sent the case back to Jeddah's Criminal Court.

Raif Badawi is yet to receive the latest sentence in writing to appeal. His lawyer, Waleed Abu al-Khair, is himself in prison, facing charges for his peaceful activism. Raif Badawi had been charged with "apostasy", a crime that carries the death penalty in Saudi Arabia. He has been detained since 17 June 2012 in a prison in Briman, in Jeddah.

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

- Calling on the authorities to release Raif Badawi immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them not to carry out any punishment of flogging, which would violate the prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in international law.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 JULY 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 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:

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Sheikh 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

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 fourth update of UA 3/13. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE23/001/2014/en>

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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 (previously referred to as the District Court), stating that 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 has now sentenced Raif Badawi to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a fine of 1 million Saudi Arabian riyals (about US\$266,630).

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. Just weeks before the sentencing of Raif Badawi, his lawyer, prominent human rights defender Waleed Abu al-Khair, was arrested on 15 April after appearing at the fifth hearing of his trial before the Specialized Criminal Court in the capital, Riyadh. He is facing a set of charges including "breaking allegiance to and disobeying the ruler", "setting up an unlicensed organization (Monitor of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia)" and "participating in establishing another organization (the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association, ACPRA)". He had been 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 for similar charges (see UA 98/14, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE23/009/2014/en>).

Scores of other Saudi Arabian human rights activists, including members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), have borne the brunt of the authorities' repression. ACPRA, set up in October 2009, 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. Most of its members are either under interrogation, detained, on trial or serving lengthy prison sentences. Dr Abdurahman al-Hamid is the latest of ACPRA's founding members to be detained, on 17 April, without charge (see UA 102/14, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE23/010/2014/en>).

A number of other independent human rights groups and activists have also been harassed by the Saudi Arabian authorities. Fadhel Maki al-Manasif was sentenced by the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh on 17 April to 15 years' imprisonment, to be followed by a travel ban of 15 years, and a fine of 100,000 Saudi Arabian riyals (about US\$26,600). The charges are related to his activism and his reporting and documentation of discrimination against Saudi Arabia's Shi'a Muslim population. He is understood to have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated in detention (see UA 304/11, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/008/2014/en>).

Name: Raif Badawi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 3/13 Index: MDE 23/012/2014 Issue Date: 23 May 2014