



Saudi Arabia: Joint statement on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Today, in commemoration of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we, the undersigned organizations, stand with the victims of torture in Saudi Arabia.

We stand with all human rights defenders and activists who have been arrested and tortured for exercising legitimate rights in reprisal against their ongoing campaign for human rights. The Saudi government has beaten them, starved them, denied them access to medicine, subjected them to extended solitary confinement, and in some cases killed them. We stand with famous activists and local heroes alike, from Walid Abu al-Khair to Hussein al-Faraj. We also stand with all political prisoners silenced by torture and abuse, including Sheikh Salman al-Awda and Khalid al-Omar.

We stand with detained and tortured women, who themselves have been more recently targeted by Saudi abuse - especially those who have defended women's and human rights. They have been subjected to various forms of torture, including sexual abuse such as forced strip-searches, threats of rape, beatings, and prolonged solitary confinement. We stand with them all, from Loujain al-Hathloul to Nouf Abdel Aziz.

We stand with children executed based on confessions extracted under torture, such as Mujtaba al-Swaiket and Abd al-Karim al-Hawaj. We stand also with children who are still facing the risk of execution, and who themselves have confessed under torture. We stand with at least 12 minors currently facing the risk of execution, including Ali al-Nimr, Dawoud al-Marhoun, Abdullah al-Zaher, Jalal al-Labbad, Muhammad al-Faraj, and Abdullah al-Huwaiti.

We stand with the families of individuals who have been executed after they were tortured in detention, including Abbas al-Hassan, Fadel al-Labad, and Sheikh Nimer al-Nimer. We further stand with their families, upon whom the Saudi government inflicts further duress by denying them access to the remains of their loved ones. We also stand with the families of individuals who were killed by torture and abuse in prison, and into whose deaths there have been no credible investigations - including Dr. Abdullah Al-Hamid.

We stand with foreign expatriates who are abused and tortured, sometimes in their workplaces and often in detention facilities. We stand with the families of Muhammad Imran and Muhammad Afzal, two Pakistanis who were forced to smuggle narcotic pills within their bodies. The government convicted them in trials they did not understand and executed them without allowing them access to justice. The government continues to torture their families by refusing to return their remains. We stand with Hussein Abou al-Khair, a Jordanian convicted for drug crimes and sentenced to capital punishment, who may be executed at any moment. Abou al-Khair was subjected to multiple acts of torture, including hanging him from his feet and beating him on his body, feet, hands, and face. With these acts of torture, the Saudi authorities obtained a forced confession that was used to convict him and sentence him to death.

We stand with all of the victims of torture in Saudi Arabia, and we call for those responsible to be held accountable. We state with conviction that the crime of torture and the accompanying absence of any means of legal accountability contribute to our complete lack of confidence in the Saudi justice system. We testify that Saudi Arabia violates its

commitments to international laws, chiefly including the Convention against Torture.

As the Saudi government still refuses to allow a country visit by the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, despite his repeated request to visit since 2006, Saudi Arabia has demonstrated its unwillingness to change practice in its prisons and consequently continues to practice torture, to the extreme detriment of the safety and lives of its prisoners.

We call on the Saudi Authorities to end the practice of torture throughout the country, to vacate the sentences of all of those convicted by means of torture, to investigate all allegations of torture and punish those who committed those acts accordingly, and to allow the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment to visit the country to conduct a complete and unfettered examination of the country's implementation of its commitments under the Convention against Torture.

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