

URGENT ACTION

SHUHUH TRIBE MEMBER FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

The Omani Internal Security Agency has subjected Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi, a member of the Shuhuh tribe, to an enforced disappearance, a crime under international law, since his arbitrary arrest on 19 December 2021. His whereabouts are unknown and he is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Amnesty International urges the Omani authorities to disclose Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi's whereabouts and release him immediately.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Hamood bin Faysal al-Busaeedi
Ministry of Interior
al-Wazarat St., 3415 Way
al-Khuwayr, Muscat
Sultanate of Oman
Email: MinisterOff@moi.gov.om
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Your Excellency,

*The Omani Internal Security Agency, which is in charge of the national security in the country, has been holding **Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi**, a member of the Shuhuh tribe, in an unknown place of detention, thus subjecting him to enforced disappearance, a crime under international law, as recognized by the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which Oman is a state party. He is at risk of torture and ill-treatment, and even death.*

On 19 December 2021, Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi went to the police station in the town of Dibba al-Baya, Musandam governorate, Oman, with his wife and three of their children to collect ID cards for their children. His wife stayed in the car outside the police station. At the station, police officers acting under orders of officers from the Internal Security Agency, detained Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi without presenting a warrant or any other legal document, then searched his car and confiscated his phone. His family was not informed about the reason for his arrest, and they have not heard from him since that day.

Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi is a relative of one of the members of the Shuhuh tribe previously subjected to an unfair trial. Trial documents revealed that the authorities had targeted the individuals based on their online browsing habits in relation to Oman's Musandam province and the Shuhuh tribe that lives there.

On 24 January 2022, Amnesty International wrote to the Omani Human Rights Commission seeking their assistance in confirming Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi's whereabouts, the reason for his arrest and any charges he may be facing. They have yet to respond.

In light of the above, we urge you to immediately release Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi, unless he is promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in accordance with international law and standards. Pending his release, we urge you to disclose his whereabouts and to provide him with prompt and regular access to his family, lawyer and any medical attention he may require and ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi (48) is a member of the Shuhuh tribe. In the course of 2020, he lost his job in a private company in the UAE due to the pandemic and returned to Musandam. The Shuhuh tribe exists on both sides of the UAE-Omani border and its members make up the majority of the residents of Musandam, known locally as Ru'us al-Jibal, which is a territorial exclave of Oman. The Shuhuh tribe and Musandam province have culturally distinct practices from mainland Oman, including the manner of dress and agricultural and animal husbandry practices. Their practice of Islam also differs from the Ibadi sect that predominates in Oman.

There have been waves of arbitrary detentions of Musandam residents championing the region's local history and culture since 2015, and reliable reports of arbitrary detention of Shuhuh tribe members in Musandam dating back at least to 1991. In addition, the government has repeatedly undertaken demolitions of homes on the pretext that they are in violation of building codes. Authorities have often expropriated lands for state use after demolishing the homes built on them. Since September 2014, the "immediate removal team" of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities & Water Resources has announced the imminent or completed demolition of dwellings and other local structures in Musandam's Dibba, Khasab, and Bukha municipalities on at least 15 occasions.

Between May and April 2018, six men, all from the Shuhuh tribe and including a national of the United Arab Emirates, were arrested and subject to enforced disappearance for several months. Between August and October 2018, following an unfair trial, a court in Muscat [sentenced](#) the six men to life imprisonment on charges that included "using information technology to prejudice the security and unity of the country and its territories". On 17 November 2019, the Sultan pardoned four of the six prisoners who were released a year later. The other two men were released in April 2021. One of the victims, after his release, spoke with Amnesty International and confirmed that he was tortured.

Oman severely curtails freedom of expression in the country resulting in the prosecution of critics, activists and peaceful demonstrators.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 April 2022

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi (he/him/ his)

ADDITIONAL TARGET

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SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

Suggested Tweet: *#Oman must immediately disclose the whereabouts of Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi and release him unless he is promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in accordance with international law and standards @moigovom [Link to UA]*