

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

The Saudi Arabian authorities have denied human rights defender Mohammed al-Qahtani contact with, and not disclosed his whereabouts to, his family since 24 October. Mohammed al-Qahtani is the co-founder of the now disbanded Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), formerly one of Saudi Arabia's few independent human rights organizations, and is serving a 10-year prison sentence for his peaceful human rights work. His family suspects that the authorities are not allowing him to contact them for previously complaining about being assaulted by another prisoner in his ward in October 2022. Amnesty International urges the Saudi Arabian authorities to reveal Mohammed al-Qahtani's whereabouts, allow him to contact his family and immediately and unconditionally release him.

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

*King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Phone: +966 111 488 2222
Fax: +961 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
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Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,

I am alarmed to learn that **Mohammed al-Qahtani**, human rights defender and co-founder of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), has been denied visits and contact with his family since 24 October 2022.

Mohammed al-Qahtani's wife told Amnesty International that she has not had contact with her husband for 11 days ago. On 30 October, she called the prison to inquire about her husband. The prison guard told her that Mohammed al-Qahtani had been transferred to another prison, but he does not know his location.

Mohammed al-Qahtani was arrested in March 2012 and interrogated regarding his work with ACPRA and peaceful activism. On 9 March 2013, the Criminal Court in Riyadh sentenced him to 10 years in prison to be followed by a travel ban of equal length on charges including "breaking allegiance to the ruler", "questioning the integrity of officials", "seeking to disrupt security and inciting disorder by calling for demonstrations", and "instigating international organizations against the Kingdom." The court also ordered disbanding the ACPRA, confiscation of its property and the closure of its social media accounts.

This is not the first time Mohammed al-Qahtani was denied contact with his family. In April 2021, he was held incommunicado after testing positive for Covid-19, raising fears regarding his health and well-being for the duration of his illness.

I urge you to reveal Mohammed al-Qahtani's whereabouts, and immediately and unconditionally release him. Pending his release, the authorities must ensure he is allowed to contact his family without any delay.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In March 2012, Mohammed al-Qahtani and Dr Abdullah al-Hamid, founders of ACPRA, which was established in 2009, were arrested for their work and peaceful activism. In March 2013, they were sentenced to 10 and 11 years in prison, respectively. Dr Abdullah al-Hamid suffered from a stroke on 9 April 2020 and [remained in detention](#), despite being in a coma in the intensive care unit at al-Shumaisi Hospital in Riyadh. He later [died](#) on 24 April 2021.

Mohammed al-Bajadi, also one of the 11 founding members of ACPRA, was arrested in March 2011 and tried before the notorious [Specialized Criminal Court](#) for attending a peaceful protest outside the Ministry of Interior in Riyadh. In April 2012, he was sentenced to four-years in prison followed by a five-year travel ban based on a range of charges linked to his peaceful human rights activism. After being released and re-arrested on multiple occasions, Mohammed al-Bajadi was detained once again in May 2018 and remains in detention without charge or trial.

Members of the now disbanded Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA) have been extensively targeted by the Saudi Arabian authorities over the past decade. ACPRA has reported on human rights violations and helped 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.

As of November 2022, Amnesty International has documented the cases of 55 individuals in Saudi Arabia who have been prosecuted for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, including human rights defenders, peaceful political activists, journalists, poets, clerics and others.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic and English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 December 2022

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mohammed al-Qahtani (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/004/2014/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Dr. Hala bint Mazyad bin Mohammed Al Tuwajri
Human Rights Commission
Email: info@hrc.gov.sa

HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Al-Saud
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
30 Charles Street, Mayfair, London, W1J 5DZ.