

# URGENT ACTION

## DEATH SENTENCE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS COMMUTED

On 24 September 2024, the appeals chamber of Saudi Arabia's Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) commuted Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi's death sentence for his social media posts, resentencing him to 30 years in prison, a ludicrously harsh punishment for exercising his right to free expression. Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi, a 55-year-old retired teacher, was sentenced to death by the SCC on 9 July 2023 for his peaceful online activity on X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. He was convicted on trumped up terrorism charges for posts in which he criticized the Saudi King and Crown Prince and Saudi's foreign policy, called for the release of detained religious clerics and protested increased prices. Amnesty International calls on Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi.

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

*Walid bin Muhammad Al-Sama'ani*  
Minister of Justice  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
Postal Code 11472, P.O. Box 7775  
Email: 1950@moj.gov.sa

Your Excellency,

While I welcome the news that the unjust death sentence against Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi has been commuted, I am distressed to learn that the appeals chamber of the SCC has resentenced to 30 years in prison and that he remains in detention for his online expression.

According to his brother, Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi was arrested on 11 June 2022 by State Security forces as he sat with his wife and children in front of their house in al-Nawwariyyah neighbourhood in the city of Mecca. He was kept in solitary confinement in Dhahban prison near the city of Jeddah for four months, during which he was not allowed to contact his family or access a lawyer. Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi was allowed to contact his family only when he was moved to al-Ha'ir prison in Riyadh, about four months after he was arrested.

During questioning, interrogators asked Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi about his political opinions and his views on other imprisoned Saudi nationals, including religious clerics Salman al-Awda and Awad al-Qarni, both of whom were detained in 2017 and face the death penalty for their political views.

According to the verdict and charge sheet reviewed by Amnesty International, Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi was convicted under articles 30, 34, 43 and 44 of Saudi's counterterrorism law, including for posts in which he criticized the Saudi King and Crown Prince and Saudi's foreign policy, called for the release of detained religious clerics and protested increased prices, all of which are views protected under his right to freedom of expression. He is not accused of any violent crime.

On 29 May 2024, the Specialized Criminal Court also [sentenced](#) Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi's brother, Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi, to 20 years in prison for social media posts criticizing the government.

**I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi as he has been convicted solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to well-informed sources, the appeals chamber of the SCC commuted the death sentence against Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi on 24 September 2024 and resented him to 30 years in prison. Saudi Arabia's judicial system lacks transparency, and court proceedings are often shrouded in secrecy, leaving families and defendants in agonizing limbo. The SCC Appeals Court does not explain its judgements or issue written judgments, and defendants and their lawyers are often not informed promptly of the outcome of their appeal until they repeatedly inquire with court officials, sometimes over several weeks or months.

The Specialized Criminal Court had sentenced 55-year-old Saudi retired teacher Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi to death on 9 July 2023 on trumped-up terrorism-related charges solely related to his online activity on X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi's brother, Dr Saeed bin Nasser al-Ghamdi, is an Islamic scholar and government critic living in self-imposed exile in the United Kingdom. He told Amnesty International that he believes that his brother's death sentence was a reprisal for his own activism.

Amnesty International has documented acts of reprisal against family members of dissidents, activists and human rights defenders in exile, including 40 cases of relatives of activists who found themselves – by no official order or other form of notification – [under travel bans](#), effectively forcibly separating families.

Over the past three years, Amnesty International has documented an escalating crackdown in Saudi Arabia against individuals who voiced their opinions on social media. The Specialized Criminal Court, the country's notorious counter-terror court, has imposed punishments of imprisonment up to 45 years using vague provisions under anti-cybercrime and counterterrorism laws.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** English and Arabic.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 13 May 2025.

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

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi (he/him).

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/7162/2023/en/>.

## ADDITIONAL TARGETS

His Excellency Hrh Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Al-Saud  
*Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary*  
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
15 Curzon Street, London W1J 5HW  
30 Charles Street, Mayfair, London, W1J 5DZ.  
15-16 Queen Street, London W1J 5PQ  
020 7917 3000  
Salutation: Your Excellency

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Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud is the Prime Minister and Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, and the de facto ruler of the country. He is not present on social media but could be reached at:

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00966114882222  
Email  
admin@cpc.gov.sa  
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Salutation: Your Excellency