

URGENT ACTION

BRITISH BUSINESS ANALYST ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Saudi authorities arrested British national Ahmed al-Doush, a senior business analyst with Bank of America, as he was departing back home on 31 August 2024 at King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. He was returning to the UK, where he resides, after visiting Saudi Arabia with his wife and children. He was held incommunicado and reportedly in solitary confinement for 33 days after his arrest and was denied UK consular assistance and access to legal representation for over two months. He told his family that he has been informed that the charges against him are in relation to a deleted social media post and his alleged association with a Saudi critic in exile, with whom he has no relationship beyond knowing his son. The information available indicates that there has now been a trial session, despite underlying evidence to the charges still being unclear, with the judge indicating that a judgment would be issued soon. More than six months after his arrest, he remains arbitrarily detained. Saudi authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed al-Doush and allow him to return to the United Kingdom.

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

Walid bin Mohammad AlSama'ani
Minister of Justice
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Postal Code 11472, P.O Box 7775
Email: 1950@moj.gov.sa

Your Excellency,

I am deeply concerned about the continued detention of British national Ahmed al-Doush, who has been arbitrarily detained in Saudi Arabia since 31 August 2024 with multiple violations of his fair trial rights. He is currently held in al-Hair Prison in the capital Riyadh. Ahmed al-Doush was detained at King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh on 31 August 2024 when he was travelling back home to the UK with his wife and their three children after a visit to Saudi Arabia.

During his first hearing before a judge in the week of 27 January 2025, five months after his arrest, Ahmed al-Doush was told that charges would be issued against him for using social media to spread fake, untrue and damaging news against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and that he was accused of having a relationship with an individual who threatened the Kingdom's national security. He did not have a lawyer present, and he said he only realized he was being brought before a judge when he arrived at the hearing.

Based on the questions asked during his extensive interrogations by Saudi authorities, his family believes these accusations may relate to a 2018 tweet Ahmed al-Doush made concerning the situation in Sudan, with no mention of Saudi Arabia, which he then deleted. His family believed the Saudi authorities' second accusation related to his alleged association with a Saudi critic in exile with whom Ahmed al-Doush has no relationship beyond knowing his son. Although Ahmed al-Doush appears to have since been formally charged, his family have yet to see the charges against him. Since January, Saudi authorities have only allowed him intermittent communication with his family.

*Ahmed al-Doush was assigned a state-appointed lawyer at his first hearing in January, but by March 2025, they had only met once, and Ahmed al-Doush is not permitted regular communication with him. Ahmed al-Doush faced a second trial hearing on 4 March 2025, again without prior notice. During this hearing, a judge indicated that a judgment would be issued between 17-20 April 2025. **The Saudi authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed al-Doush. Until then, they must prevent further violations of his fair trial rights and ensure he has regular access to his family and legal representation.***

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For two and a half months after his arrest on 31 August 2024, Ahmed al-Doush's family was denied any communication with him. They were also not given information about his situation or the reason for his arrest. His wife and children were left in the dark about his well-being, his conditions of detention and whether and when he might be allowed to return home. He was also denied consular access to UK government representatives during this time, severely hindering the UK government and his family's ability to gather information about him, his detention and steps they might take to facilitate his release.

It wasn't until 17 November 2024 that Ahmed al-Doush was allowed a call to his wife. He was then permitted weekly phone calls with his family. However, in January, these calls were interrupted and have now become sporadic. He later told his family that his communication with them was restricted by the authorities as punishment for asking his wife during a call about that had recently been released in Saudi Arabia.

Ahmed al-Doush was subjected to extensive interrogation without a lawyer present and before being informed of the charges against him. During interrogations, he was reportedly told that if not for his social media activity, he would be home with his family. Notably, his X account has only 37 followers and a total of four posts.

Since his arrest, Ahmed al-Doush has been permitted three consular visits from the British embassy in Riyadh, with the first consular visit on 21 November 2025, nearly three months after his arrest. Ahead of the visit, the UK government did not share any information known about his detention, status or well-being with his family, claiming this was on the grounds of data protection.

Amnesty International has documented the Saudi authorities' increasing crackdown on freedom of expression, targeting both citizens and foreign nationals, many of whom have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. This includes criticizing the government and its policies.

Legal proceedings in these cases fall far short of international fair trial standards. Individuals are often held incommunicado without charge, in solitary confinement and denied access to lawyers or the courts to challenge the lawfulness of their detention.

Since 2013, Amnesty International has documented the cases of 86 individuals who had been prosecuted solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, including human rights defenders, peaceful political activists, journalists, poets and clerics. Of those, 40 were prosecuted for peacefully expressing their opinions on social media. Amnesty International is aware that the real number of such prosecutions is likely much higher.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic and English.
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 19 September 2025.
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ahmed al-Doush (he/him).

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

The Saudi Human Rights Commission:
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