

# URGENT ACTION

## ANOTHER ACPRA MEMBER SENTENCED TO PRISON

**Human rights defender Abdulaziz al-Shubaily has been convicted and sentenced on 29 May to eight years in prison by the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh for his peaceful human rights activism. He is one of the founding members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA) and if imprisoned he will be a prisoner of conscience.**

**Abdulaziz al-Shubaily** was sentenced on 29 May to eight years in prison, followed by an eight year travel ban during which he is banned from writing on social media. The Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) convicted him of “defaming the Council of Senior Scholars,” “insulting the integrity of the judicial system and the judges, and contesting their independence”, “accusing governmental authorities of violating human rights”, “violating Article 6 of the Anti-Cyber Crime Law” by “inciting public opinion against the rulers of this country and signing statements that were published online that call on people to demonstrate”, and “insisting to not abide by the judicial decision to abolish ACPRA”. He was also ordered to sign a pledge to not return to his activism. These charges are politically motivated as they relate to Abdulaziz al-Shubaily’s human rights work with ACPRA, including reports published by the organization and tweets accusing the Ministry of Interior of gross and systematic human rights violations.

Abdulaziz al-Shubaily was called for interrogation in November 2013, formally charged in July 2014, and put on trial at the SCC on 24 September 2014. In March 2015 he faced additional charges of “communicating with foreign organizations” and providing information to Amnesty International for use in two of its reports. The prosecution and the court have ignored Abdulaziz al-Shubaily’s repeated requests to be shown the evidence regarding this charge. Abdulaziz al-Shubaily has acted as the legal representative of nine of the 11 ACPRA members who have been prosecuted since December 2012. He is one of the last active founding members of ACPRA to be sentenced.

### Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the Saudi Arabian authorities to ensure that Abdulaziz al-Shubaily’s sentence and conviction are quashed and that he is not imprisoned, as he is sentenced solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Calling on them to ensure that the criminal justice system is not used to target, intimidate or harass human rights defenders;
- Urging them to protect and ensure the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly for all in conformity with Saudi Arabian’s international human rights obligations and commitments.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JULY 2016 TO:

#### King and Prime Minister

His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud

The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques

Office of His Majesty the King

Royal Court, Riyadh

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior)

+966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)

Twitter: @KingSalman

**Salutation: Your Majesty**

#### Minister of Justice

His Excellency Dr Walid bin Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Samaani

Ministry of Justice

University Street,

PO Box 7775, Riyadh 11137

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 11 401 1741 / 402 031

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Minister of Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud

Ministry of Interior

P.O. Box 2933, Airport Road, Riyadh 11134

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 11 403 3125

Twitter: @M\_Naif\_Alsaud

**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf bin Abdul Aziz - Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in London, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 30 Charles Street, Mayfair, London, W1J 5DZ tel: 020 7917 3000 or 02079173288, fax 02079173113 email: [ukemb@mofa.gov.sa](mailto:ukemb@mofa.gov.sa) complete the webform here:

<http://embassies.mofa.gov.sa/sites/uk/EN/ContactDiplomaticMission/Pages/ContactWithDiplomaticMission.aspx>; twitter: @SaudiEmbassyUK, Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2012 the Saudi Arabian authorities have been targeting civil society activists and human rights defenders, including members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), using both the courts and other administrative measures such as the imposition of travel bans as a means to harass, intimidate and impede their work in the defence of human rights. By early 2014 most of Saudi Arabia's prominent and independent human rights defenders had been imprisoned or scared into silence, or had fled the country. Most of them had already been subjected to arbitrary travel bans, and had been intimidated and harassed by the security forces, particularly the Ministry of Interior's General Directorate of Investigations (GDI, also known as al-Mabahith), before being prosecuted and given harsh sentences.

The systematic repression of human rights defenders and activists is part of a larger campaign by the authorities to silence all forms of criticism that have revealed, either directly or indirectly, human rights violations committed by the authorities. People targeted have included women's rights activists, relatives of victims of human rights violations, dissident Saudi Arabian Shi'a Muslims criticizing discrimination against their community, and anyone who communicates with international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. Since February 2014 the authorities have used the new counter-terror law to further target human rights defenders and dissidents. At least two ACPRA members have seen their trials reopen under the counter-terror law at the SCC, a special security and counter-terrorism court whose jurisdiction and procedures are unspecified, years after they had been sentenced and while serving their sentence on the same charges under other laws or by other courts. Three other ACPRA members were brought to trial before the SCC after the counter-terror law was introduced.

Members of ACPRA have borne the brunt of this persecution. Seven of the organization's founding members are currently serving lengthy prison terms. Abdulaziz al-Shubaily and Issa al-Hamid have been sentenced but not yet imprisoned. Issa al-Hamid, a founding member of ACPRA was sentenced by the SCC in Riyadh on 24 April to nine years in prison, followed by a nine year travel ban. His brothers, Dr Abdulrahman al-Hamid and Dr Abdullah al-Hamid, are also founding members of ACPRA and were sentenced to nine years and ten years in prison to be followed by travel bans of equal duration, respectively (See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/2663/2015/en/>; <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/010/2013/en/>).

Another ACPRA co-founder, Dr Mohammad al-Qahtani, was sentenced with Dr Abdullah al-Hamid on 9 March 2013 to 11 years' imprisonment followed by a travel ban of equal duration. Issa al-Nukhaifi, also a member of ACPRA, was detained on 15 September 2012 and sentenced by the SCC to three years in prison on 29 April 2013. He was released in early 2016 (See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/10/muzzling-dissent-saudi-arabia-s-efforts-choke-civil-society/>). Mohammed al-Bajadi, another founding ACPRA member, who was also released earlier this year, had been sentenced by the SCC in a secret trial on 10 April 2012 to four years in prison and a five-year travel ban. Dr Abdulkareem Yousef al-Khoder, also a founding member of ACPRA, was sentenced by the SCC on 19 October 2015 to 10 years in prison, followed by a travel ban of equal duration. In November 2014 Fowzan al-Harbi, also an ACPRA founding member, was informed that an appeal court in Riyadh had increased his earlier sentence of seven years in prison to 10 years. He was detained soon after. ACPRA activist Abdulaziz al-Sunaidi was sentenced on 13 October 2015 to eight years in prison followed by an eight-year travel ban by the SCC. Suliaman al-Rashudi, another ACPRA founding member, former president of the organization and former judge, was sentenced on 22 November 2011 to 15 years in prison followed by a 15 year travel ban.