

URGENT ACTION

TEACHER SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS FOR TWEETS

On May 29, 2024, Saudi Arabia's Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) sentenced 47-year-old teacher, **Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi**, to 20 years in prison for social media posts criticizing the government's Vision 2030 program and expressing condolences for the death in prison of a prominent human rights defender. Al-Ghamdi was arrested on November 20, 2022. According to trusted sources, he was held in solitary confinement for the first three months of his detention and has been denied access to adequate healthcare, including for his epilepsy. Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi's brother, **Mohammad**, was arrested five months prior to Asaad's arrest and sentenced to death in July 2023 solely over his social media posts. The Saudi authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi and quash his conviction and sentence.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 65.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Waleed Mohammed Al Samani
Minister of Justice
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Postal Code 11472, P.O Box 7775
Email: 1950@moj.gov.sa

Embassy of Saudi Arabia in the United States
Her Royal Highness Princess Reema bint Bandar bin
Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
601 New Hampshire Ave
NW, Washington, DC 20037
Email: Info.was@mofa.gov.sa
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Your Excellency, or Your Royal Highness,

I am gravely concerned that the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Saudi Arabia has sentenced 47-year-old teacher, **Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi**, to 20 years in prison, followed by a 20-year travel ban, solely on the basis of his social media posts on X (formerly Twitter) criticizing government policies and expressing condolences for the death in prison of prominent human rights defender and founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), Abdullah al-Hamid.

Al-Ghamdi was arrested on November 20, 2022 following a raid on his home. According to trusted sources, he was held in solitary confinement for the first three months of his detention. Al-Ghamdi suffers from epilepsy, and according to trusted sources he has been denied adequate healthcare in detention for his condition, and as a result he has suffered repeated fainting spells, falls, and seizures. He has also been denied treatment for the injuries caused by these seizures.

The Saudi authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi and quash his conviction and sentence. Pending his release, they must ensure that al-Ghamdi urgently receives adequate healthcare. I also call on you to stop misusing terrorism charges to criminalize the exercise of the human right to freedom of expression, and to repeal or substantially amend the counter-terrorism and anti-cybercrime laws, ensuring that all laws are fully compatible with international human rights law and standards.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On November 22, 2022, security forces raided **Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi**'s home in Jeddah and forcefully dragged him away after ransacking his home and confiscating some books and computers. Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi is the brother of both Dr Saeed bin Nasser al-Ghamdi, an Islamic scholar and government critic living in self-imposed exile in the United Kingdom, and Mohammad bin Nasser Al-Ghamdi, a 55-year-old Saudi retired teacher [sentenced](#) to death in July 2023 on trumped-up terrorism charges solely due to expressing criticism of the authorities on X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. On March 19, 2024, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined that Mohammad's detention is arbitrary and in violation of his human rights.

Since 2011, Amnesty International has documented how the Saudi authorities have used the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) as an instrument of repression to silence dissent. The SCC has routinely used vague provisions under the anti-cybercrime and counter-terror laws equating the exercise of the human right to freedom of expression with "terrorism". Amnesty International has documented how [every stage of the SCC judicial process](#) is tainted by human rights violations. The SCC's judges have presided over grossly unfair trials and handed down prison sentences of up to 45 years and numerous death sentences. Among those the court has punished severely are journalists, human rights defenders, political activists, writers, religious clerics, and women's rights activists. Nearly all human rights defenders, women's rights activists, independent journalists, writers, and activists in the country have been arbitrarily detained, put through prolonged and unfair trials – most often by the SCC – or released but under conditions that include travel bans and other arbitrary restrictions to their human rights, such as to prevent them to exercise their peaceful activism.

As of July 2024, Amnesty International has documented the cases of 82 individuals who had been prosecuted solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, including human rights defenders, political activists, journalists, poets, and clerics. Of those, 32 were prosecuted simply for 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, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: January 17, 2025

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Asaad Al-Ghamdi (He/him)