



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

SAUDI HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER DETAINED AFTER FILING COMPLAINT AGAINST INTELLIGENCE OFFICER WHO TORTURED HIM



Saudi Arabian human rights defender Khaled al-Omair

Human rights defender **Khaled Al-Omair** had been detained by agents of the General Directorate of Investigation (GDI), the secret police in Saudi Arabia (also known as “Mabahith”), after having filed a complaint before the Saudi Royal Court against one of the officers of the GDI, who tortured him during his imprisonment.

The case dates back to 27 December 2008, when Al-Omair announced his intention to protest against the blockade and Israeli aggression against Gaza in Palestine. He was arrested on the morning of the following day by security forces before he could start the demonstration.

On 15 May 2011, he was sentenced by the Specialised Criminal Court in Riyadh to eight years in prison, with a travel ban for the same period after the completion of his sentence. The court found him guilty of inciting demonstrations and calling for them via the internet.

He was tortured and ill-treated since his arrest and prior to his trial. The torture involved handcuffing his hands and feet, putting him in solitary confinement for nine consecutive days in



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an empty cell with nothing to sleep on (not even a blanket), and forcing him to stand for long hours during some days.

On 06 October 2016, Al-Omair had started a hunger strike which lasted 29 days to protest the failure to release him despite serving the duration of his prison sentence of eight years, as of 05 October 2016. On 03 November 2016, he was transferred from Al-Ha'ir Political Prison (a maximum security Mabahith-affiliated and Saudi Arabia's largest prison) in Riyadh to Mohammed bin Nayef Counseling and Care Centre in preparation for his release. After five months, on 12 April 2017, Al-Omair was finally released.

When Al-Omair followed up the case at the Royal Court, the complaint was referred to the State Security Apparatus for consideration in accordance with the directives of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz. On 5 July 2018, Al-Omair went to the GDI to follow up the complaint who asked him to leave pending investigation of his complaint. On the following day, a group of agents of the GDI approached him and asked him to go with them to Al-Ha'ir Political Prison to meet with a special committee, which they said was formed to look into his complaint, but which apparently was formed to interrogate him only. However, has been not contactable since entering prison.

ICSFT expresses grave concern about the continuation of serious violations documented against human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia including the detention of Khalid Al-Omair solely due to his torture complaint against the intelligence officer who tortured him. This in itself constitutes a flagrant violation of all human rights instruments that prohibit torture and affirm the accountability of the perpetrators before a fair and independent judiciary.

Thus, ICSFT urges the Saudi Arabian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release human rights defender Khalid Al-Omair from prison and to open an immediate, independent, impartial and thorough investigation into the torture of Khalid Al-Omair with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards.

We further urge Saudi authorities to end torture in all its prisons in order to fulfil the Kingdom's international human rights obligations, and to guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.