

URGENT ACTION

SUDANESE ACTIVIST AT IMMINENT RISK OF DEPORTATION

Sudanese political activist Alaa Aldin al-Difana is at imminent risk of being deported from Saudi Arabia to Sudan, where he would be at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment. He is currently held in an unknown location. He is a prisoner of conscience.

According to information provided to Amnesty International, **Alaa Aldin Daffalla al-Difana's** family received a phone call on 9 July from officials in Abha prison, south west Saudi Arabia, where he had been detained since 25 May, informing them that he had been transferred to the capital city, Riyadh. However, they refused to tell the family to which prison he was taken to. On 6 June, officials from Abha prison had requested Alaa Aldin al-Difana to sign and put his thumbprint on a document already signed by his employer, stating that he is not owed any money by his employer and no longer has obligations towards the employer. These recent developments raise serious fears that the authorities are preparing to deport Alaa Aldin al-Difana to Sudan, where he would be at risk of arbitrary detention, unfair trial, torture and other ill-treatment.

Alaa Aldin al-Difana was arrested on 26 December 2016 by security officers from Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Interior in his apartment in Mecca, western Saudi Arabia. He was then interrogated repeatedly from the time of his arrest until mid-March. During most of that period, he was held incommunicado in solitary confinement. According to information provided to Amnesty International, his interrogations were conducted by the Saudi Arabian security services, and on one occasion by Sudanese officials in Saudi Arabia. Alaa Aldin al-Difana was questioned about his role in the civil disobedience actions in Sudan and was accused of inciting people to join the movement. He has been denied access to legal representation throughout his detention and interrogations.

Alaa Aldin al-Difana was first detained in Dhahban prison outside of Jeddah, in western Saudi Arabia. On 25 May, he was transferred to a correctional facility in Abha. He is a journalist and long-standing opposition activist, who has called for social and political reforms in Sudan. Most recently, Alaa Aldin al-Difana expressed his support for the November and December 2016 civil disobedience action in Sudan on his Facebook page.

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

- Calling on the Saudi Arabian authorities to release Alaa Aldin al-Difana immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them, in accordance with their obligations under international law, not to deport him to Sudan, where there is a real risk he would be subjected to unfair trial, torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 AUGUST 2017 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 Interior)
+966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Twitter: @KingSalman

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Aziz
bin Saud bin Naif
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 403 3125
Twitter: @MOISaudiArabia

Salutation: Your Highness

And copies to:

Human Rights Commission

Bandar Mohammed 'Abdullah al-Aiban
P.O. Box 58889, Riyadh 11515
King Fahd Road
Building No. 3, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 418 510

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 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.** This is the first update of UA 50/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/5779/2017/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Alaa Aldin al-Difana is a member of the National Umma Party (Hizb al-Umma al-Qawmi), an opposition political party in Sudan. On his Facebook page, he wrote about medical negligence in Sudan's hospitals and corruption within Sudan's government ministries. He is also a well-known journalist and has written for various Sudanese websites. According to his family, he was previously arrested in 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2012 for his activism in Sudan. He has been residing in Saudi Arabia since 2012.

Amnesty International has recently documented the detention of two other Sudanese activists residing in Saudi Arabia, Elgassim Mohammed Seed Ahmed, 52, and Elwaleed Imam Hassan Taha, 44, who are also at risk of imminent deportation. See Amnesty International's Urgent Action: *Two Sudanese activists at risk of deportation* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/6439/2017/en/>).

Amnesty International has also documented dozens of cases and received numerous reports of the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) crackdown on activities of anti-government political activists, human rights defenders and civil society activists in 2016 and early 2017. Between November 2016 and February 2017, the NISS arrested dozens of opposition political party members and other activists who supported the civil disobedience action in November and December 2016 which was held in protest against the rise in fuel, electricity, transport, food, and medicine costs in Sudan. Those detained were subjected to various methods of torture and other ill-treatment including electric shocks, beatings, whippings, solitary confinement, and severe psychological pressure. This included threats of rape during interrogations. In many cases the activists have been held for weeks or months without being charged with any crime.

Under the principle of non-refoulement, Saudi Arabia is prohibited from transferring individuals to another country or jurisdiction where they would face a real risk of serious human rights violations or abuses. The principle of non-refoulement has the status of customary international law making it binding upon all states, even those who have not ratified the relevant treaties. Saudi Arabia is also prohibited, as a state party to the Convention Against Torture, from returning people to states where there are substantial grounds for believing that they would be in danger of being subjected to torture.

Further information on UA: 50/17 Index: MDE 23/6701/2017 Issue Date: 11 July 2017