

URGENT ACTION

OMANI WRITER ARRESTED AND STILL DETAINED

Omani writer, journalist and human rights activist Sulaiman al-Ma'mari has been detained since 28 April. He has been denied any access to his family or lawyer. He may be a prisoner of conscience detained for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Writer, journalist and human rights activists **Sulaiman al-Ma'mari**, aged 42, was arrested on 28 April at approximately 12:30pm by the Omani internal security services after he was summoned by telephone to report immediately to the police Special Section (al-Qism al-Khas) in the Qurm area of the capital, Muscat. He has been held since then without access to his family or lawyer.

Sulaiman al-Ma'mari's arrest appears to be in relation to his recent online activity in which he, alongside other writers, called for the immediate release of friend and colleague Abdullah Habib, a poet and film critic who was arrested on 15 April after making peaceful comments on Facebook. Abdullah Habib was released without charge on 4 May.

Oman imposes arbitrary restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and in recent years many peaceful activists, government critics and others including writers and intellectuals have been arrested and detained, often on public order charges or under vaguely worded penal code provisions that criminalize insulting the Sultan. Those detained are often held for several days before being released.

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

- Calling on the Omani authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Sulaiman al-Ma'mari if his arrest is in connection with views he has expressed which were peaceful and which did not advocate hatred or violence;
- Ensure that while he is detained, he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that he has regular access to a lawyer of his choice and his family;
- Reminding the Omani authorities that, in line with the UN's 1998 Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the government must provide protection to human rights defenders, including against any violence, threats, retaliation or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of the legitimate exercise of their rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JUNE 2016 TO:

Minister of Justice

Sheikh Abdul Malik al-Khalili
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 354
RUWI PC 112
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: info@moj.gov.om
Twitter: @moj_gov

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Hamoud bin Faisal bin
Said Al Busaidi
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127, Ruwi 112
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Chairman, Oman Human Rights

Commission

Dr 'Isa Bin Sa'id Sulayman al-Kiyumii

Fill in form at:

http://www.nhrc.om/website_complaintsadd.php?language=en

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Fax: +968 24 2189 06

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY ABDULAZIZ ABDULLAH ZAHIR AL HINAI
Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman, 167 Queens Gate Sw7 5HE, 020 7225 0001 ,Fax 020 7589 2505

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sulaiman al-Ma'mari has held many prominent positions, including Head of the Omani Society of Writers and he currently works as the Head of the Cultural Department for Radio Oman. He has published several collections of short stories and his work has been well received both in Oman and across the region. He won the Yusuf Idris Arabic Short Story Award in 2007 and was voted as the most popular Omani writer at the 19th Muscat International Book Fair in 2014. His 2013 novel was very popular across the Arab world.

In January and February 2011 Sulaiman al-Ma'mari participated in the protests in Oman – which took place amidst popular unrest across the Middle East and North Africa – which led to a number of reforms.

In March 2016, following a United Nations review – the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) – of the country's human rights record, the government of Oman rejected recommendations to guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, including a recommendation to support civil society organizations. Oman only partially accepted recommendations to review current legislation that fails to protect the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association.

Amnesty International has documented instances of prolonged arbitrary and incommunicado detention in Oman between 2013 and 2015. Cases of torture and other ill-treatment by state security officials during detention have also been reported.

Name: Sulaiman al-Ma'mari

Gender m/f: m

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