

PUBLIC

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UA 26/05 Fear of torture/prisoners of conscience

OMAN **Muhammad Bin Rashid Al-Gharbi, lecturer at Sultan Qaboos University
Dr Ali Bin Hilal al-Abri, lecturer at Sultan Qaboos University
Dr Jabir al-Sādi, a lecturer at Sultan Qaboos University
Said al-Harhi, former judge
And possibly over 100 other detainees**

Hundreds of people, mainly academics and religious figures, are reported to have been detained in mass arrests since the beginning of this year. At least 100, including those named above, are held incommunicado, which puts them at risk of torture. Amnesty International is concerned that many may be prisoners of conscience, held solely for the non-violent expression of their beliefs

The government has given no explanation for the arrests, which have taken place in various parts of the country, particularly the capital, Muscat. Many of the arrests have been carried out at night and most of those arrested had their computers and documents seized. Relatives have apparently not been told why the detainees have been arrested, and none of the detainees is said to have been charged or given access to lawyers, or allowed to challenge the legality of their detention in court.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mass arrests and incommunicado detention of political opponents in Oman has often resulted in allegations of torture and ill-treatment. Torture and ill-treatment are may be used during interrogation in order to obtain information about political suspects or for use as evidence in court to obtain conviction following unfair trials.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that hundreds of people have been detained in mass arrests since the start of this year, and that over 100 are reportedly held incommunicado;
- seeking assurances that the detainees will not be tortured or ill-treated, and that they will be given prompt and regular access to their families, lawyers and any medical attention they may need;
- calling for the detainees to be released if they are held solely for the non-violent expression of their conscientiously held belief;
- asking for details of any recognizably criminal charges against the detainees, a list of all those charged and details of legal proceedings against them, including the dates of trial hearings and the name of the trial court.

APPEALS TO:

Sultan of Oman

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
Diwan of the Royal Court
PO Box 875, Muscat 113
Sultanate of Oman

Fax: + 968 24 735 375

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Zaher al-Hinai
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
PO Box 354, Muscat 112
Sultanate of Oman

Fax: + 968 24 602 725

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Sa'ud bin Brahim al-Busa'idi
Minister of Interior, Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127, Ruwi 112
Sultanate of Oman

Fax: + 968 24 696 660

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Oman accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 March 2005.