

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 23/05/91
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Date: 17 December 1991

MEDICAL CONCERN

**@Muhammad al-Fasi
£SAUDI ARABIA**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the well-being of Muhammad al-Fasi, a Saudi Arabian businessman who was arrested during a visit to Jordan on 2 October 1991 and subsequently extradited to Saudi Arabia. He is said to have been detained because of his public criticism of the Saudi Arabian Government during the Gulf War. He is being held in a secret location in the capital, Riyadh and there are reports that he has been subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

Background

During the Gulf crisis, Muhammad al-Fasi publicly criticized the Saudi Arabian Government. He broadcast his views from a radio station transmitting from Baghdad, the "Voice of the People of Najd and Hijaz". He also issued press releases and made public statements critical of the Saudi Arabian Government. In the aftermath of the Gulf war, he set up a fund to send humanitarian aid to Iraq.

Muhammad al-Fasi is related to the ruling al-Saud family through the marriage of one of his sisters to Prince Turki bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, brother of King Fadh bin 'Abd al-'Aziz. The Saudi Arabian Government, however, apparently sought his arrest because of his criticisms of the government. Muhammad al-Fasi is aged 38, married with seven children, and was in Jordan with his family when arrested by Jordanian security forces at the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman. Following his arrest, Jordanian officials acknowledged in the press that he had been handed over to Saudi authorities. The Saudi Arabian embassy in Jordan, however, denied knowledge of his extradition.

Reports were subsequently received that Muhammad al-Fasi was detained at a secret location in Riyadh. Amnesty International appealed to the Saudi Arabian Government for information on his whereabouts, fearing that he was at risk of torture. He is since reported to have been tortured and ill-treated. Unconfirmed reports state that he has been subjected to beatings all over his body, shackled and blindfolded for prolonged periods and subjected to *falaqa* (beating on the soles of the feet). He is said to have sustained a fracture to one of his hands and it is believed that he may be without medical attention. It is further reported that he has been forced to sign confessions and to read these confessions in front of a video camera. While Amnesty International cannot at this stage confirm these allegations, the details are consistent with reports of the torture of other political detainees in Saudi Arabia which remains a common practice.

Amnesty International is gravely concerned for Muhammad al-Fasi's safety while he continues to be held in secret detention. There has been no response from the Saudi Arabian Government to calls for information on his whereabouts and it is feared that his torture and ill-treatment will continue.

Amnesty International is again appealing urgently to the Saudi Arabian Government to disclose information on his whereabouts, guarantee his safety and make known the reasons for his detention and any charges which are to be brought against him.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Middle East
Date: 17 December 1991

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Muhammad al-Fasi
SAUDI ARABIA**

Keywords

Theme: incommunicado detention in secret location/torture

Summary

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for Muhammad al-Fasi, a Saudi Arabian businessman who was arrested in Jordan and extradited to Saudi Arabia where he is now being held in secret detention at an undisclosed location in Riyadh. He is said to have been detained for having publicly criticized the Saudi Arabian Government at the time of the Gulf war and is reported to have been subjected to torture.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below:

expressing concern at reports that Muhammad al-Fasi is being held incommunicado without access to legal counsel or family and that he may have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment in detention

urging that his whereabouts are made known and guarantees provided that he will be humanely treated while he remains in detention

asking for information on the legal basis for his arrest and the reasons for his incommunicado detention, and expressing concern for his well-being and state of health

seeking assurances that, as a matter of urgency, he will be granted access to legal counsel, proper medical attention and to friends or family members

asking whether any charges have been brought against him and seeking assurances that, unless he is to be promptly charged and tried with a recognizably criminal offence, he be released from detention

Letters should invite a response.

Addresses

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
King Fadh bin 'Abd al-'Aziz
Head of State, Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines and Prime Minister
Office of His Majesty the King
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: King Fadh bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 403370 GUESTP SJ or 403260 NASRIA SJ or
405000 MFA SJ or 405920 DIPLO SJ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: +966 1 402 3707 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

His Royal Highness
Prince Naif bin 'Abd al-'Aziz
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Riydah
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Minister Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 404416 DMMOI SJ (Riyadh) or 603788 AMN SJ (Jeddah)

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia in your own country