

JORDANToujan al-Faisal (f), aged 53

Prisoner of conscience Toujan al-Faisal was hospitalised on 9 June. She had been refusing prison food for around two weeks, after prison guards reportedly threatened to contaminate her food with dirt and other substances. She is protesting at her unfair trial and the conditions which she is being held in, at a women's prison in the capital, Amman.

Toujan al-Faisal was taken to the King Hussein Medical Centre in Amman reportedly suffering from high blood pressure, dehydration and exhaustion. She is reported to have suffered significant weight loss. She is continuing to refuse food but is reportedly being drip-fed. According to reports received by Amnesty International Toujan al-Faisal has been traumatized by her ill-treatment in the Jweideh Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre. She is apparently being punished for protesting against the loudspeaker calling people to the early morning prayer, which disrupted her sleep.

Toujan al-Faisal was detained on 16 March after she sent an email letter to the King, which was also published on a website: it was deemed to be defamatory to the state, since it accused the Prime Minister of "benefiting financially" from a government decision to double car insurance costs. She was released on bail on 27 March, but rearrested three days later. She has been in prison ever since.

Toujan al-Faisal was put on trial in April before the State Security Court in Amman. She was denied the right to call some key witnesses and the Court refused to accept affidavits and other documents for the defence.

Toujan al-Faisal was tried under laws introduced in October 2001, designed to restrict freedom of speech, already limited in Jordan, still further. On 16 May she was sentenced to one and a half years in prison, on charges which included "publishing material deemed harmful to the country's reputation and that of its citizens" and "tarnishing the Jordanian state". She was also convicted on a charge brought by the Governor of Jweideh Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre of "uttering words" before another deemed to be "detrimental to his religious feeling". Apparently this charge related to her protest against the early morning call to prayer.

Amnesty International considers Toujan al-Faisal a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the non-violent expression of her political beliefs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Toujan al-Faisal was sentenced under Article 150 of the Penal Code. In October 2001 this was expanded to cover a number of new and vaguely defined offences, and all offences under Article 150 were brought under the jurisdiction of the State Security Court.

The new offences included: "harming national unity"; "harming the prestige, integrity and reputation of the state"; "inciting disturbances, sit-downs and unauthorized public meetings"; "causing harm to the dignity, reputation or personal freedom of individuals"; "destabilizing society through the promotion of deviance and immorality"; and "dissemination of false information and rumours".

Amnesty International has expressed its concern that the new laws criminalize peaceful activities. They are also in breach of international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Jordan is a State Party.

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

- calling for Toujan al-Faisal to be released immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience;
- expressing concern that Toujan al-Faisal has reportedly been ill-treated in prison;
- asking that she be well-treated according to international human rights treaties such as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which Jordan has ratified;
- urging the authorities to ensure that while she remains in detention, Toujan al-Faisal is given adequate medical care;
- expressing concern that the new laws introduced in October 2001 breach international human rights treaties, including the ICCPR, to which Jordan is a state party;
- urging the authorities to amend the Penal Code and to bring the law in line with internationally recognized human rights standards.

APPEALS TO:

His Majesty King 'Abdallah bin Hussein
Office of H.M. the King
Royal Palace
Amman

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Telegrams: King 'Abdallah bin Hussein, Amman, Jordan

Faxes: + 962 6 462 7421

Salutation: Your Majesty

Faris Nabulsi
Minister of Justice
PO Box 6040
Amman

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Amman, Jordan

Fax: + 962 6 568 0238 or 962 6 464 3197

Salutation: Your Excellency

Quftan al-Majali
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 100
Amman

Jordan

Fax: + 962 6 560 6908

Salutation: Your Excellency

Dr Fayez Tarawneh
Chief of the Royal Court
PO Box 80
Amman

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Telegrams:Chief of the Royal Court, Amman, Jordan

Fax: + 962 6 463 1452

Salutation:Dear Dr Tarawneh

COPIES TO:

Her Majesty Queen Rania
President of the Royal Commission on Human Rights
Office of her Majesty the Queen
Royal Palace
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Salutation:Your Majesty

and to diplomatic representatives of Jordan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.