

**May-June  
2022**

منظمة سند الحقوقية  
Sanad Right Organisation



# **Report on the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia**





# Arrests





Sanad obtained information about the horrific arrest of journalist and businessman Mansour Al-Raqaiiba at the end of May 2022. Mansour's house was raided by 30 security agents and his phones were confiscated before he was taken away in a security car. Following this, the Raqaiba family were rounded into one room and were all searched, including the women and children. Security forces then went into Mansour's restroom and searched it thoroughly, scattering all its contents.

It is reported that this is the second time Mansour has been arrested. He was arrested the first time because of clips he posted on his Snapchat. Sanad calls on the Saudi regime to quickly reveal the location and condition of Mansour Al-Raqaiiba's detention and calls for his immediate release. It also calls for the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience in Saudi prisons.





# Rights violations



## Jeddah demolitions

The municipality of Jeddah announced the resumption of demolitions of 12 neighbourhoods in the coastal city, which was temporarily halted during April, claiming that this comes in the context of developing these neighbourhoods. The Saudi government thus continues the forced displacement of tens of thousands of residents without a clear plan for compensation or provision of alternate housing. Note that the eviction notice came only a few days before its enactment.

Sanad affirms its rejection of all forms of demolitions in Jeddah, and considers it a form of internationally prohibited forced displacement. We call on the Saudi regime to promptly provide alternative housing for those affected, and to compensate them generously. We also call on the government to address the wave of increased housing prices that resulted from this heinous violation.





## Prison violations

Violations committed by the Saudi regime inside prisons against detainees have been documented based on sources obtained by Sanad, including: taking forced confessions, threatening detainees to not retract their statements, being incarcerated for long periods without knowing the charge, and solitary confinement. Sources report that the judges who heard these arguments in the Specialised Criminal Court are: Abdulaziz Madawi Al-Jaber, Abdulaziz Safar Al-Harithy, Badr Abdullah Al-Rayes, and Nayef Fahd Al-Jarallah. The judges ignored the violations and issued unfair sentences against a number of detainees. Sanad documented these incidents and is taking legal action against these violations.



Human rights activist Dr Mohammed bin Fahd Al-Qahtani has been subjected to physical assault in prison. This was announced by his wife, Mrs Maha Al-Qahtani, on her Twitter account. Mrs Al-Qahtani related that a psychiatric patient in her husband's ward had physically assaulted Dr Al-Qahtani while he was sleeping, before the issue was taken care of by prison security. It is worth mentioning that Mrs Al-Qahtani previously made several appeals to have her husband removed from the psychiatric ward and for his protection. Dr Al-Qahtani had previously announced that he went on hunger strikes until his demands were met. Some patients caused a fire in prison which caused the death of one of the detainees, according to Mrs Al-Qahtani's account.





# The Judiciary



In light of further deterioration of the judicial system in Saudi Arabia, Sanad learned that decisions have been issued to transfer the services of some public prosecution employees at the Public Prosecution to the Ministry of Justice to work as judges at the Specialised Criminal Court. Among the names that were confirmed to work as judges at the Specialised Criminal Court are: Imad bin Muhammad Al-Tuwaijri, Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhini, Saeed bin Muhammad Al-Rafdah, Muhammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Farhoud, Ahmed bin Aqeel Al-Saqiyah, and Abdullah bin Shaya Al-Qahtani.

It is worth noting that these names were among the Public Prosecution team that submitted the lawsuit against a number of prisoners of conscience and pleaded against them before the Specialised Criminal Court. This also coincides with the humiliating arrest of a number of judges of the Specialised Criminal Court from their workplace, with the accusation of high treason.







# Legal demands





A number of human rights organisations and academic institutions launched a campaign entitled 'Hajj is not safe' to shed light on violations and abuses practiced by the Saudi regime against pilgrims and visitors to the holy sites in Saudi Arabia. The campaign aimed to highlight Saudi Arabia's use of Hajj as a tool of repression and as a means of violating rights.

Sanad called on human rights organisations, associations and symbols of the Islamic world to participate in the campaign to protect the security of pilgrims and visitors to the Two Holy Mosques. Sanad asserts that the campaign is justified as the Saudi regime lures pilgrims by granting them visas for Hajj and Umrah, only to arrest them upon their arrival and deport them to other countries where their lives are in danger. Furthermore, some personalities are prevented from performing Hajj because of their position on some issues or for exercising their freedom of expression.



Amnesty International called on the Saudi authorities to end the travel restrictions on activists and their families. The organisation said that while families celebrate in gatherings for Eid, Saudi authorities are separating families from each other as sources revealed that the travel ban was imposed on all families of activists and opponents abroad.

While thousands of those released and the families of activists abroad live under the injustice of a travel ban, including children and patients who urgently need treatment abroad, the Saudi authorities prevent some families from even making phone calls, and threaten the families of opponents with arrest if any contact is made with their parents or children abroad.





- A study conducted by the human rights charity Grant Liberty revealed that Saudi Arabia accumulated 311 prisoners of conscience during the tenure of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. In this context, the British newspaper The Independent said that political prisoners detained for their opposition to the government in Saudi Arabia are subjected to “murder, sexual assault and inflicted with sheer brutality” during their time in prison.

Quoting researchers in the charity, the newspaper confirmed that 53 prisoners were tortured, six were sexually assaulted, and 14 were pushed into undergoing hunger strikes. The article stated that the report examined the suffering of 23 women's rights activists, 11 of whom are still behind bars, in addition to 54 journalists who are detained. The Saudi regime had arrested about 22 prisoners for crimes they committed when they were children, five of them were executed, four died in custody, while 13 others face the death penalty.

The CATO Institute for Studies pointed out that the social liberation that Bin Salman is trying to establish on society does not help in improving the human rights record on the ground, but rather, it makes Saudi Arabia “more authoritarian than China during the era of Mao Zedong and North Korea during the era of Kim Il Sung”. The report joked that, fortunately, detainees can now attend a movie before they are detained! But the truth is that “the crown prince does not make a free society”.



The US report also indicated that Saudi Arabia was rated 7 out of 100 by Freedom House, making it one of the ten most repressive countries globally. It lies in a human rights vault along with Equatorial Guinea, North Korea, Eritrea, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Saudi Arabia is also “more harmful factor for the international community than Russia”.



On June 26, international human rights institutions and organisations celebrated International Day in Support of Victims of Torture to condemn repressive governments' torture of prisoners and detainees. Saudi Arabia under the tyrannical regime of Muhammad bin Salman stood out as being one of the most prominent countries that allows torture in its prisons, and allows perpetrators of these humanitarian crimes to escape punishment and accountability.

The Saudi regime's attempt to polish the image of its prisons through its official media channels does not negate all the heinous violations that occur therein. In these prisons, hundreds of detainees are tortured, Dr Abdullah Al-Hamid and Dr Musa Al-Qarni were killed, and a number of elderly people and people with chronic diseases are at risk of dying.

# **REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS**

**FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

On World Press Freedom Day, on the 3rd of May, Reporters Without Borders issued its annual report on press freedom in the world. Saudi Arabia ranked 166 out of 180 countries. The organisation said: "There is no free media in Saudi Arabia; journalists are subject to strict surveillance even if they are abroad." The report indicated that the number of journalists detained by the Saudi regime has more than tripled since 2017.





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