

URGENT ACTION

FOUR MEN ARBITRARILY ARRESTED, RISK TORTURE

Four men are being held incommunicado, without charge, in Oman. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Businessman **Ibrahim Abdullah Juma al-Balushi** is understood to have been arrested on May 6 near the Wadi Al Jezi border crossing with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). He had been travelling to visit his mother in the northern Omani town of Shinas. Ibrahim al-Balushi lives and works in the UAE city of Al Ain, but is originally from Oman.

The same day, **Nasser al-Ehyai** and **Said al-Zeidi**, who work for the Omani Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Agriculture respectively, engineer **Ali Mohammed al-Ma'amari** and his brother-in-law **Talal Mohammed al-Ma'amari**, a teacher whose uncle is the imprisoned Shoura Council member Dr Talib Al Ma'amari, were summoned to the Special Section (*al-Qism al-Khas*) of the police headquarters in Muscat, the capital. Two days later the four men reported to the police headquarters and were arrested.

Ali al-Ma'amari was released without charge on May 8. The other four men have not made contact with their families since they were arrested, and are all understood to have been denied access to lawyers. When relatives of Ibrahim al-Balushi and Talal al-Ma'amari visited the police headquarters in Muscat on May 12 and 14 they were not allowed to see the men or told why they had been arrested.

Ibrahim al-Balushi and Talal al-Ma'amari had been arrested in 2001 and sentenced by the State Security Court to three years in prison for "sparking sectarian differences". Both were pardoned by the Sultan of Oman and released after they had served 10 months of their sentences. Amnesty International does not have information about the trial proceedings.

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

- Urging the Omani authorities to ensure that Ibrahim al-Balushi, Talal al-Ma'amari, Nasser al-Ehyai and Said al-Zeidi are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and are immediately granted access to their families and lawyers;
- Asking that the men be released or charged with a recognizably criminal offense and tried in proceedings that meet international standards for fair trial.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JUNE 2014 TO:

Head of State and Prime Minister

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id
Diwan of the Royal Court
The Palace, Muscat 113
Sultanate of Oman

Fax: 011 968 24 735 375

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of the Interior

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Chairman, National Human Rights Commission

Mr Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Riyami
P.O. Box 29, Postal Code: 103
Bareq A' Shati
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Fax: 011 968 24 648 801

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Hunaina Sultan Ahmed Al Mughairy, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman
2535 Belmont Rd NW, Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 745 4933 | Phone: 1 202 387 1980

Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International sought information from the Embassy of Oman in London on 13 May about the arrest of Ibrahim al-Balushi, Talal al-Ma'amari and Nasser al-Ehyai, but no response has been received yet.

It is not clear why the men were arrested. But the fact that they have been held for one week with no access to their lawyers or families is cause for alarm.

Prolonged arbitrary and incommunicado detention was documented in Oman in 2013. Instances of torture and other ill-treatment by state security officials during detention were also reported, with activists and critics of the government being subjected to abuses including beating, hooding, mock execution, sleep deprivation and prolonged solitary confinement.

Oman has committed to upholding certain human rights: it is a state party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1996) and two of its optional protocols (2004); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (2003); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2006) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009).

However, in recent years, Amnesty International has recorded instances of unnecessary and excessive use of force by the police against peaceful demonstrators; arrests in the context of large demonstrations, arbitrary restrictions on freedom of expression, and discriminatory laws and practices.

Oman's human rights record was assessed under the non-binding UN Universal Periodic Review in 2011 and was urged by other states to review its legislation; accede to other core international human rights treaties and combat discrimination and violence against women.

Names: Ibrahim Abdullah Juma al-Balushi, Nasser al-Yahyai, Said al-Zeidi, Talal Mohammed al-Ma'amari (m)

Issues: Arbitrary arrest, Incommunicado detention

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