URGENT ACTION

YEMENI LGBTQI+ RIGHTS DEFENDER ARRESTED

On 8 April 2020, 29-year-old Yemeni national Mohamed al-Bokari was arbitrarily arrested from his home in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, and detained incommunicado at Malaz prison. Following his arrest, al-Bokari was accused of "perversion" and "imitating women" after he published a video stating his belief in personal freedoms of LGBTQI+ individuals.

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
2. Click here to let us know the actions you took on *Urgent Action 110.20*. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ambassador Princess Reema Bandar Al-Saud
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
601 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington DC 20037
Phone: 202 342 3800
Contact Form: https://bit.ly/2KScqag
Twitter: @SaudiEmbassyUSA @rbalsaud
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Your Majesty,

On 8 April 2020, Saudi security forces arbitrarily arrested Yemeni national Mohamed al-Bokari (born in 1991) from his home in al-Yarmouk in Riyadh. Mohamed al-Bokari was then transferred to Malaz prison in Riyadh where he remains detained. He has neither been formally charged nor informed when his trial will begin. According to a source close to him, Mohamed al-Bokari's physical and mental health has significantly deteriorated, and he suffers from a heart condition. He has had no legal representation to date.

According to the source, Mohamed al- Bokari was held incommunicado for a month, beaten and tortured to force him to "confess" that he is a homosexual. Furthermore, following his arrest, Mohamed al-Bokari was accused of "perversion", "imitating women" and "disturbing public order". Al-Bokari was arrested after he appeared in a homemade video in which he responded to a question by one of his followers about his views on homosexuality by saying: "Every person is free to do what they will, and gay people have rights. Every person has rights. I hope you leave gay people be and not intervene in their lives. Every person is free."

Two of Mohamed al-Bokari's friends, both Yemeni nationals who were visiting him at home were also arrested with him on 8 April. Both men were later released and deported back to Yemen, while Mohamed al-Bokari was kept in detention. "We are very worried about Mohamed. He isn't allowed any visits in prison, and he hasn't contacted us in two weeks", the source told Amnesty International.

I urge you to ensure that Mohamed al-Bokari is released immediately and unconditionally, especially in light of his deteriorating health and COVID-19 outbreak concerns. I further call on you to ensure that any charges against Mohamed al-Bokari are dropped and that he is allowed to remain in Saudi Arabia, as his deportation to Yemen could put his life at risk. In the interim, ensure that Mohamed al-Bokari is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, that he is immediately granted adequate medical attention and access to a lawyer.

Yours sincerely,

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Saudi Arabian authorities have continued to escalate the repression of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, including in their crackdown on online expression. They harass, arbitrarily detain and prosecute government critics, human rights defenders and anyone who dares to express themselves freely.

In November 2019, an official announcement and promotional video published by Saudi Arabia's state security agency categorized feminism, homosexuality and atheism as "extremist ideas", punishable by jail and flogging. While the state security agency issued a clarification that the definition of extremism in the video "contained many mistakes", leading feminists and women human rights defenders in the country remain detained and prosecuted for their human rights work.

Prior to his arrest, Mohamed al-Bokari's residency permit in Saudi Arabia had expired. He is currently at risk of being deported back to Yemen, his homeland which he fled after having receiving death threats from armed groups following his defence of personal liberties and human rights. Mohamed al-Bokari also survived an abduction attempt, after which he left Yemen to seek safety in Saudi Arabia.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic and English
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 13 August 2020.
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mohamad el-Bokari (he/him)