URGENT ACTION

**TRIAL HEARING FOR IMPRISONED WOMEN’S RIGHTS ACTIVIST**

**A hearing for fitness influencer and women’s rights activist, Manahel al-Otaibi, is scheduled to take place before Saudi Arabia’s Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) on May 26, 2025. Manahel al-Otaibi has been imprisoned since November 16, 2022. On January 9, 2024, the SCC sentenced Manahel al-Otaibi to 11 years in prison for “terrorist offenses” in a secret trial. She was initially charged with violating the Anti-Cyber Crime Law, then faced additional charges under the counter-terror law due to her tweets in support of women’s rights as well as posting photos of herself at the mall without an abaya (a traditional loose-fitting long-sleeved robe) on Snapchat. Saudi authorities have subjected her to torture and other ill-treatment, as well as enforced disappearance.**

TAKE ACTION:

* Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
* [Click here](https://www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/) to report your action(s) on ***Fifth UA 14.24***. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

**Waleed Mohammed Al Smani**

**Minister of Justice**

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Postal Code 11472, P.O.Box 7775

Email: minister-office@moj.gov.sa

***Send a copy of your letter to the address below***

**CC: Embassy of Saudi Arabia in the United States**

**Her Royal Highness Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**

601 New Hampshire Ave NW,

Washington, DC 20037

Your Excellency,

I am deeply concerned about the continued arbitrary detention of fitness influencer and women’s rights activist, **Manahel al-Otaibi**. Manahel al-Otaibi informed her family that her next trial date is set for May 26, 2025 in front of the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC).

The specifics of the hearing on May 26, 2025, are unclear because the authorities restrict and monitor Manahel al-Otaibi’s communication with her family and therefore she has not been able to inform them of details of court proceedings.

Manahel al-Otaibi was arrested on November 16, 2022, and charged with violating the Anti-Cyber Crime Law for tweeting hashtags in support of women’s rights and posting photos on Snapchat of herself at the mall without wearing an Abaya (a traditional loose-fitting long-sleeved robe).

As well as being subjected to months-long periods of enforced disappearance, Manahel al-Otaibi has also been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in al-Malaz Prison. Manahel al-Otaibi suffers from multiple sclerosis, a chronic neurological disorder. In her last phone call to her family on May 11, 2025, she reported severe pain in her leg. She has not received adequate medical care.

I urge you to order the immediate and unconditional release of Manahel al-Otaibi, as she has been convicted solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression. Pending her release, she must be granted immediate access to medical care, and her allegations of torture and other ill-treatment must be impartially investigated.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Manahel al-Otaibi**’s case was first heard by the Criminal Court in Riyadh. The charges against her are based on her social media posts which were “opposed to regulations and laws that relate to women”, including through calling to #EndMaleGuardianship. According to court documents reviewed by Amnesty International, Manahel al-Otaibi was charged with “publishing and spreading content that contains committing public sins and inciting individuals and girls in society to renounce religious principles and social values and to violate public order and public morals on her Twitter account”, in violation of the Anti-Cybercrime Law. On January 23, 2023, the Criminal Court ruled that it had no jurisdiction to try this case and referred the case to the SCC. The SCC has routinely used vague provisions under the anti-cybercrime and counter-terror laws equating peaceful expression with “terrorism”. Amnesty International has documented how [every stage of the SCC judicial process](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/1633/2020/en/) is tainted by human rights violations.

Before the most recent enforced disappearance between December 15, 2025 to March 15, 2025, Saudi authorities had already forcibly disappeared Manahel al-Otaibi for over five months from November 5, 2023 until April 2024. On April 14, 2024, she called her family to inform them that she was being held in solitary confinement in al-Malaz Prison with a broken leg after being brutally beaten, and without access to medical care.

In September 2024, after a one-month period of renewed incommunicado detention, Manahel al-Otaibi was able to contact her family, and she alleged she had been held in solitary confinement for a full month and subjected to beatings by prison guards and fellow prisoners. She also told her family that she was forced to clean toilets, and that although she was released from solitary confinement to contact them, prison authorities had threatened that they would be sending her back. Her sister, Fawzia al-Otaibi, told Amnesty International that she believes the only reason Manahel al-Otaibi was finally permitted a phone call was in order to convey a message to her family to stop being publicly outspoken about her imprisonment.

Manahel al-Otaibi suffers from multiple sclerosis, a chronic neurological disorder, which her family said developed after she witnessed the arrest of her older sister, Mariam al-Otaibi. Mariam al-Otaibi, a prominent human rights defender and campaigner against the male guardianship system, was detained in 2017 for 104 days for defending women’s rights and is currently subjected to a travel ban and restrictions on her freedom of expression. In the same case against Manahel al-Otaibi submitted by the public prosecution to the Riyadh Criminal Court, the Public Prosecutor accused Fawzia al-Otaibi of leading “a propaganda campaign to incite Saudi girls to denounce religious principles and rebel against customs and traditions in the Saudi culture” and using a hashtag “which promotes liberation and the fall of male guardianship”. Fawzia al-Otaibi fled Saudi Arabia fearing arrest after being summoned for questioning in 2022.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET**: English, Arabic, or your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL**: October 12, 2025

**NAME AND PRONOUN**: Manahel al-Otaibi (she/her).

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA**: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-manahel-al-otaibi-subjected-to-torture-in-saudi-prison-fourth-ua-14-24/>