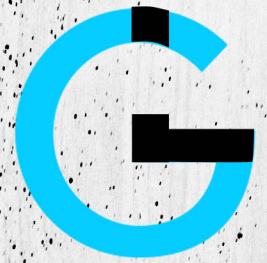


Grant Liberty

**Saudi Prisoners of Conscience**  
Annual Report 2022



## **MBS 'v' Saudi Citizens**

What's happening in Saudi Arabia?

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# Grant Liberty

Grant Liberty is a London-based non-profit organisation which aims to stand and fight for human rights worldwide. Grant Liberty is the official advocacy wing of Forgotten Women; Grant Liberty is the official global voice for those who have been silenced.

We aim to provide liberty for all regardless of race, colour and belief, to hold to account those who have forced injustice on the innocent.

We do this by lobbying, raising awareness, engaging in global coverage, petitioning and involving national and international courts to fight against global oppression.

We expect individuals, groups, communities and governments to uphold these values in every corner of the globe. Wherever there is an infringement of these values, we shall aim to address them.

Grant Liberty is funded by private donors from the UK, US and EU. It does not receive funding from any government.

**Founded:** 2016

**Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom

## Our Values

Grant Liberty is an official global voice for those who have been silenced, oppressed and imprisoned. Our core values are based on fundamental beliefs as follows:

- Justice
- Honesty
- Freedom
- Equality
- Dignity
- Accountability

## Forgotten Women

Forgotten Women is a charity run by women for women, a charity dedicated to helping women in crisis and emergencies. The charity was set up after witnessing first-hand the 'sex for aid' and manipulation of women in vulnerable situations. We envision a world where every woman is given the opportunity to live a life free from humiliation, poverty and abuse. A world in which women are free to preserve their dignity, health, well-being and economic independence.

**Advocacy is an integral part of our overall mission, you cannot be a humanitarian and ignore the global struggle for basic rights.**

Miss Sundeep Bahia, Founder





There are individuals, groups and communities worldwide whose basic human rights have been denied, and who suffer in silence, whether because of extreme torture, abuse and deprivation of liberty. For this reason, the birth of Grant Liberty was inevitable.

Saladin Ali, CEO



# FOREWORD

Grant Liberty fights for communities around the world whose human rights are being trampled and whose voices are being silenced. It is only natural, therefore, that we focus on prisoners of conscience in key countries with the worst human rights abuses record, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and China. In this report, we highlight Saudi Arabia where today, activists are languishing in jail for the crime of wanting a better world. They have been tortured, forced into hunger strikes and sexually assaulted, held in solitary confinement for months on end and separated from their families. Many still await charges years after their arrest, and some have seen their family members and lawyers follow them into prison. This report seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the position of prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia – from the campaigning that led to their arrest, to the barbaric treatment they have suffered and the legal position they face. We include new data providing insight into the bigger picture alongside individual testimonies detailing the very real personal torment from the family members of those in prison.

Saladin Ali, CEO, Grant Liberty



# IN BRIEF

Saudi Arabia is trying to present itself as a modern nation with its leader, Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud (MBS), attempting to achieve this through his 2030 Vision- a strategy to pivot the Saudi economy away from its dependency on oil. To achieve this, Saudi Arabia must make alliances with powerful countries that can bring new economic life to the Kingdom. Key international players like the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe are necessary allies to the Kingdom as they represent a pathway to green energy deals and tourism. It is for this reason that the regime is hiding the truth about Saudi Arabia from the rest of the world in fear that if they knew the truth, they would be excluded from the lucrative deals they so desperately desire. With each lavish sporting or entertainment event, the Kingdom comes one step closer to fooling the international community into thinking that they are potential allies. The recent Saudi rave in the desert attended by 73,000 revellers is an appalling example of trying to entertain the young population whilst wielding the iron fist against those who campaign for a more just and equal inclusive society.

However, we know the truth and are here to share the stories of who's imprisoned by the regime in hope that the world will wake up to the truth behind this expensive PR campaign- murder.

Our 2021 report details the systematic abuse of dissidents within Saudi Arabia and presents MBS for who he really is- a man who covets power so desperately that he abuses his own citizens in order to conserve it. Since our last report, a further 22 prisoners of conscience have joined their predecessors in jail. A list of these new prisoners is provided at the end of this report.

Alongside extensive data on the abuse faced by prisoners as a whole, we detail first-person accounts of family members of those whose loved ones faced prison – Lina al-Hathloul, Areej al-Sadhan, Abdullah al-Odah and Abdullah al-Ghamdi. Although words cannot do justice to the horrors these individuals have faced, we hope that their stories will inspire the international community to take action and treat Saudi Arabia as a foe rather than an ally.

At Grant Liberty, we will not stop until every prisoner of conscience is freed and Saudi Arabia is recognised for what it really is- a pariah to democracy and human rights.

## What is Saudi Arabia like?

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established in 1932 as an absolute monarchy. Although its lineage of rulers formally held absolute power, it wielded that power in coordination with a range of influential interest groups, including the State's conservative Sunni religious establishment, independent clerics, security services, and senior members of the Saudi business community. The coordination between Royals and clerics can be dated back to 1703 when the Royal family joined forces with Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founding father of the revivalist and fundamentalist movement within Sunni Islam and the Hanbali reformist doctrines.

When Mohammed bin Salman assumed office as the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, his arrival was greeted amongst Western elites with an excitement matching an understandable desire for reform within the Kingdom, including a retreat from the Royal/Cleric coordination.

That desire for reform sat within a geo-political strategy – articulated within Vision 2030 – which seeks to transition the Saudi economy away from its dependency on oil by diversifying the Kingdom's domestic output into new and green technologies, amongst others.

The MBS era can properly be understood in two phases, divided by a single date – October 2, 2018. In the first 16 months of the Crown Prince's de facto rule, his actions were widely regarded as positive by the international community - even as waves of arrests intensified.

On 2 October 2018 everything changed. Journalist, thinker, campaigner, and in recent years Washington Post columnist, Jamal Khashoggi was brutally murdered inside the Saudi Arabian embassy in Turkey on the express orders of Mohammed bin Salman. Three years on, no justice has been achieved for Jamal as 2021 saw another year without convictions for his murder.



Jamal Khashoggi's death is first and foremost a tragedy for his family and those who loved and respected him. However, it is also a clear answer to the question on everyone's lips-

### **Is he really a great reformer? The answer is written in blood - no.**

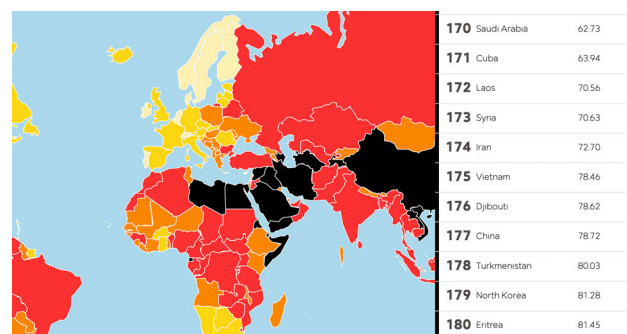
Today Saudi Arabia languishes at 170 out of 180 on the world press freedom index and 149th on the Cato Institute's Human Freedom Index as anyone who dares to speak against the regime is imprisoned, becoming prisoners of conscience. Victims include activists, bloggers, religious leaders, royalty, and government officials.

Royalism is an outdated system that has proven to violate the core rights of its citizens. Despite MBS' claims to modernize the Kingdom, its political system is archaic, meaning that true modernization will not be possible as long as only the elite hold the power. We urge that MBS truly modernize the country by shifting this draconian power to the people, rather than enhancing the already too-powerful stances of the Royals.

Today, at least 220 individuals remain imprisoned in Saudi Arabia for speaking against MBS or daring to suggest true reform within the Kingdom, with 22 more imprisoned in 2021.

Each of these prisoners is defined as a prisoner of conscience, as they are detained for voicing their thoughts.

The majority of these prisoners have not been charged and are being arbitrarily detained without just legal cause. Those who are charged, are convicted of a litany of trumped-up charges that are in complete violation of the standards of international law. The sheer depth of prisoners and the abuse they face illustrate the facade of MBS' claims of modernization as modernity cannot exclude human rights. With human rights so ingrained in the international community, you may be thinking, how are these violations possible?



Credit: [freedomhouse.org](https://freedomhouse.org)





## Repression and intimidation are not - and never should be - the acceptable companions of reform

JAMAL KHASHOGGI, SAUDI JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR (1958 - 2018)

## HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

### The answer is sadly simple - Terror Courts.

Terrorism is defined as “the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims”. Given the grievous nature of true terrorist offences, the idea of a special court designed to prosecute these crimes seems like a great idea. However, Saudi Arabia has exploited the terror court system to instil terror into their citizens by prosecuting any form of dissent, be it a single tweet or participation in a peaceful protest.

The apparent specialist nature of these courts means they are exempt from the domestic laws that bind ‘ordinary’ courts, giving the authorities free reign to design their own system. The resultant system is one of cruelty as ‘defendants’ comprise ordinary citizens, whose only crime is the want of a better world.

These citizens are subject to the most extreme violations of human rights as their right to a fair trial, their right to liberty, and often their right to life is abrogated.

Although these courts see themselves as completely exempt from domestic law, they are still bound by international law as these obligations are conveyed to each and every state and supersede any domestic legislation. These terror courts undermine a key facet of democracy- the independence of the judiciary, as this new judiciary has transformed the courts into a weapon of repression, wielded by the government to secure obedience and as a result, their power.

The Courts apply Saudi Arabia’s draconian laws that enable them to charge citizens with the vague offence of conspiring against the State- meaning that any form of dialogue against the Government can land you in one of these courts. Victims include human rights defenders who speak against the system that ultimately takes their liberty. Although Saudi women were granted the right to drive in 2018, the women’s activists who led this movement are still languishing in jail for even daring to suggest this idea. As Saudi Arabia is applauded for this advance in women’s rights, the reality is that they have punished the instigators, effectively preventing any further progress from being made.

No one is exempt from these charges as ordinary citizens and those in power fall victim, including the royal Princess Basmah, the cousin of MBS. These courts often use mass trials, sentencing up to 700 defendants at once. One such victim was Ahmad Al Hossan who was arrested when he was just 16 years old. He was later sentenced by these courts to 44 years in prison for allegedly “hosting protesting individuals in his house”. Sadly, Ahmad’s case is not unique, but rather encapsulates a universal experience faced by the victims of these terror courts. Given the definition of terrorism, “the unlawful use of violence and intimidation against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims”, one can only conclude that it is these corrupt governments that use terrorism to maintain their political power. The very notion behind these courts, to prevent terrorism, is nothing but a façade as their true purpose is to wield the regime’s power against the citizens they vowed to protect.

imprisoned since our 2020 report at the end of this report.

Each of these prisoners is defined as a prisoner of conscience, as they are detained for voicing their thoughts.

The majority of these prisoners have not been charged and are being arbitrarily detained without just legal

Saudi Arabia’s Terror  
Courts are a complete affront to the standards of international law and make a mockery of justice

Rhianna Dorrian, Legal Officer for Grant Liberty

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM ONCE THEY ARE IMPRISONED?

With over 61,000 prisoners divided over 20 regional prisons, these prisons are overcrowded and dangerous. Once imprisoned by these courts, prisoners face extreme human rights violations as they are subject to torture, sexual assault, hunger strikes, and solitary confinement during their arbitrary detention. The Saudi prisons are slowly turning into a graveyard for prisoners of conscience.

“Saudi Arabia wasn’t always this repressive. Now it’s unbearable.”

Jamal Khashoggi, Washington Post September 18, 2017

In terms of international law, Saudi Arabia is bound by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a matter of customary international law. Although Saudi Arabia may dispute their legal obligations under the UDHR due to its Western influence, they are a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and are still in violation of regional declarations of the OIC by violating human rights obligations. One such declaration that Saudi Arabia is a party to is The Cairo Declaration of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation on Human Rights, which is seen as the Islamic response to the UDHR.

Despite these obligations, Saudi Arabia continues to violate the rights of prisoners. More details of these abuses are outlined below.



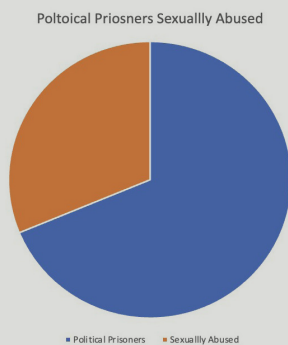
# TORTURE

We have seen this happen before, but not at this kind of scale. It's the most oppressive era we have witnessed

HALA AL-DOSARI, SAUDI SCHOLAR AND ACTIVIST, JUNE 2019

”

Torture is absolutely prohibited under international law in all circumstances; however, Saudi continues to violate this law. The Saudi state is a signatory of the 1987 Convention against Torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Yet, when it comes to prisoners of conscience, torture is endemic. We find evidence of at least 110 cases of individuals who have suffered physical abuse at the hands of their captors in 2021.



The abuses are documented starting from first contact with the authorities and in the worst cases end in death. The forms of torture we found include severe beatings and flogging; cigarette burns; electric shocks; hanging by hands and feet; beating on the soles of the feet; sleep deprivation; injection with paralyzing substances; being handcuffed and blindfolded while in prison; the use of prolonged solitary confinement and sexual abuse as documented in sections below. We have seen widespread accounts of forced confessions under torture and threats to both the individual victim and their family members.

The Saudi authorities are undoubtedly aware of this as new evidence emerges each year that proves these victims' claims are true. In July 2021, more evidence arose when an anonymous Saudi prison guard sent texts to Human Rights Watch describing how political prisoners were subjected to severe torture made him feel compelled to tell the world how immoral these prisons have become.

In one forwarded message, a prison guard described the suffering of an unnamed male human rights activist detained in 2018, saying “they did not have mercy on [name withheld] ... I would go to him, and I would find

him a lifeless corpse and expect that he died until the doctor comes and helps him with painkillers and other medicine to revive him. Then they would again torture him.”

## SEXUAL ASSAULT



HALA AL-DOSARI, SAUDI SCHOLAR AND ACTIVIST

In July 2021 new details of alleged sexual abuse emerged from an anonymous prison guard who witnessed the torture first-hand. His accounts describe how high-profile prisoners of conscience, including Saudi women's rights activists detained in early 2018, were subjected to severe torture, including electric shocks, beatings, whipping, and sexual assault. The details were sent to Human Rights Watch and described the torture that occurred in Dhabhan prison, north of Jeddah, and another location the guards identified as a secret prison. The guard described how Loujain al-Hathoul, now conditionally released, was “*subjected to sexual harassment unprecedented to me from what I've witnessed. They were relishing insulting her. They were mocking her that she is liberated and would not mind the harassment such as sticking their hands into her underwear or touching her thighs or spouting degrading words at her.*”

Rape is an act so vile that no human person should be subjected to. Saudi Arabia's continued use of sexual assault as an act of torture is an affront to both law and morality.

Rhianna Dorrian, Legal Officer for Grant Liberty

Another victim is Samar Badawi, an inspiration who received the International Women of Courage Award from the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama in 2012 for her work in women's rights. However, six years after receiving this award, she has been subject to extreme sexual assault whilst behind bars with guards using rape as a weapon to humiliate and brutalize her. This is the reality of women's rights in Saudi Arabia as although these women's work won women the right to drive in 2018, as instigators of this movement they were punished for breaking from the status quo and violated in the most extreme way.

Legitimate detention cannot ever involve sexual assault and Saudi Arabia must stop the epidemic of assault within their prisons. Despite credible sources documenting these claims, Saudi Arabia refuses to conduct an independent investigation into the allegations, nor will they allow an independent international human rights body to enter the country to conduct one.



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama present Samar Badawi, political activist from Saudi Arabia with an International Women of Courage Award at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. on March 8, 2012

This lack of cooperation can only mean one thing- they are hiding something, and we know what it is; the systematic abuse of political prisoners.

The Saudis promised to decrease the numbers after 2019, it decreased in 2020 but continued to rise again during 2021 (and that's only till July 2021). Therefore shows the death penalties are rising again

Rape and other forms of sexual assault in detention are a particularly despicable violation of the inherent dignity and right to the physical integrity of every human being, and accordingly constitute an act of torture

UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights



# DEATH PENALTY

There are three categories of political prisoners facing the death penalty in Saudi Arabia – religious figures, human rights activists, and, incredibly, those who committed their supposed crimes as children. We have found evidence of at least six young people who have been executed in the MBS era for so-called crimes committed as children. They are Abdulkareem al-Hawaj, Mojtaba alSuwaiket, Munir al-Adam, Saeed Mohammed al-Skafi and Salman al Quraish, and Moustafa Al-Darwish. All of these young people were put to death together alongside 34 other men in a gruesome spectacle in April 2019 after being convicted of offences related to the attending protests during the Arab Spring uprisings in Qatif.

One victim currently facing the death penalty is Muhammad Essam Al-Faraj whose crime was, almost unbelievably, attending a funeral. He was nine years old at the time. He has endured horrific conditions that violate his basic human rights, including a denial of legal access and torture. As of December 2021, no official verdict has been given, yet he is still threatened with the death penalty for his actions as a nine-year-old boy.

In 2020, Muhammad, along with others facing the death penalty, were given momentary hope as Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission announced a ban on the execution of minors. Its statement confirmed that "no one in Saudi Arabia will be executed for a crime committed as a minor, in accordance with the Royal Order of March 2020."

A further inspection of the Royal Order announcement showed that Saudi Arabia had released two very different versions- one in English, and one in Arabic. In the Arabic version, the juvenile death penalty is only banned in instances of nonviolent crimes, as opposed to its total eradication in the English announcement. Terror charges, such as those given by the previously described Terror Courts, are an exception to this ban, meaning that in reality, nothing has changed. Instead, the Royal Order is a deliberate attempt to fool the West, presenting one version of itself to the media, whilst continuing to violate human rights behind closed doors.

The falsehood of these bans was proven by the execution of Mustafa al-Darwish in June 2021 for 'crimes' committed whilst he was a minor. His crimes included 'seeking to destabilize the social fabric' by participating in protests alongside a litany of other trumped-up charges whose dates were not explicitly given. The only time period provided is his participation in a protest from November 2011 to November 2012, a span where Mustafa was a minor.

Mustafa al-Darwish's execution, in combination with their deliberate attempt to fool the West, is evidence of Saudi Arabia trying to pull the wool over our eyes and present itself as something it's not- a respectable State. As of December 2021, there is still no official legal amendment to the policy of juvenile execution, meaning more could take place. For true reform, the ban on juvenile executions must apply retroactively, and apply to all offenses, including those given to prisoners of conscience.

Despite Saudi Arabia's attempt to fool the world, its true nature cannot be hidden as long as the voices of the oppressed speak out. We at Grant Liberty are here to ensure that this happens.

## HUNGER STRIKES

Hunger strikes are traditionally a rarity in Saudi society due to the cultural taboos around self-harm and suicide. In the years before MBS came to power, we can find only two examples of hunger strikes in Saudi jails, Saud al-Hashimi and Mohammed al-Bajadi, both of which were force-fed during their strikes.

However, in the three years since the new Crown Prince was appointed, we have evidence of a marked increase in hunger strikes in Saudi jails. At least 15 prisoners have endured hunger strikes since MBS' appointment, with three more taking place since our 2020 report. They include Loujain al-Hathloul, who began a hunger strike in August 2020 in order to force a meeting with her family.

The humanitarian Abdulrahman al-Sadhan was forced into a hunger strike in the summer of 2020, Salman al-Odah the cleric and activist, and at least 7 members of ACRPA the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association. The prisoners have been pushed into hunger strikes in order to protest a range of abuses including torture, enforced isolation from families and lawyers, arbitrary arrest, and various further human rights violations. Although some have won limited changes to their condition, such as meetings with family members, the response of the authorities has typically been further abuse, including prolonged solitary confinement and forced feeding.

The severe increase in the number of prisoners' hunger-striking shows their desperation under MBS's regime as they have no pathway to advocate for their rights. It is a stark reminder to all of us that there are no human rights under MBS if one must go on a hunger strike to obtain even the most basic rights.

# FAMILY TESTI- MONIALS



## My sister Loujain al-Hathloul ...

AT GRANT LIBERTY WE WORK WITH THE LOVED ONES OF THOSE IMPRISONED AND TRY TO SECURE THEIR RELEASE. THEIR RELATIVES ARE LEFT IN AGONY AS THEIR LOVED ONES ARE RIPPED FROM THEM. ALTHOUGH WORDS CANNOT DO THEIR PAIN JUSTICE, RELATIVES HAVE SPOKEN TO GRANT LIBERTY AND TOLD US OF THEIR HORRORS.

My sister is an award-winning women's rights activist, she has been nominated for the Nobel Prize and she is celebrated all around the world. Except at home in Saudi Arabia, where she languished in a maximum-security prison. Loujain dared to campaign for women's right to drive and an end to the outdated and outrageous male guardianship laws. She dared to attend international conferences outside of the kingdom to discuss the truth about women's rights in Saudi Arabia. She spoke out about the injustice of a system that grants men almost total superiority before the law. In 2018 she spoke at a UN conference in Geneva where she called on the Kingdom to live up to its international agreements on gender equality. Shortly after returning to the gulf, she was kidnapped. My sister spent 1001 days in prison being sexually assaulted, tortured, and degraded. Now she is free but only in name as Saudi Arabia has forbidden her from speaking of what happened to her behind bars

Loujain is not alone. Samar Badawi, Nouf Abdulaziz, and many others all remain behind bars. They too have been treated appallingly. The international community must not be complicit in these crimes. Saudi Arabia's transparent attempts to use its wealth to camouflage its severe state-sponsored human rights abuses against women cannot be allowed to succeed. Buying teams like Newcastle United rewards the kingdom with its desired PR image: a powerful, modern country and global economic power, and draws international attention away from the reality of rights abuses that occur just miles away. Neither women nor world leaders should be complicit in this fiction. As long as women inside Saudi Arabia cannot safely speak, it is the duty of the international community to raise its voice on their behalf.

Lina al-Hathloul



## **My father Salman al-Odah ...**

My father faces the death penalty in Saudi Arabia. His crime? He tweeted an innocuous message to his 14 million Twitter followers wishing an end to the diplomatic standoff with Qatar. Since his arrest in September 2017, he has been held in solitary confinement. Three years alone. He has been mistreated, handcuffed, blindfolded, chained inside his cell, and deprived of sleep and medications – brutalized to the point that he had to be taken to hospital. Our extended family has been banned from travelling and my uncle was arrested because he tweeted about my father. I am lucky – I am in the US – but my passport has been frozen and the Saudi authorities seek to intimidate me every chance they get. My father is a popular and well-respected man. That is why he has been targeted. The authorities use trumped-up charges under terror laws to exert their power over activists from my father to Loujain al-Hathloul and Maysa al-Alamoudi.

A year after he was taken, my father appeared in front of the notorious specialized criminal court - now a tool to hammer out any dissent or activism within the kingdom by cowing critics into silence by way of its fearsome reputation or silencing them permanently through the death penalty. Charges are so vague – such as the “mocking” accusation against my father – that they would be laughable were the consequences not so grave. But this is deadly serious. They want to kill my father. If they do, it will be state-sanctioned murder and they cannot be allowed to get away with it. As of November 2021, he still faces the death penalty, yet his trial keeps getting postponed. There is no justice while my father remains behind bars.

**Abdullah Alaoudah**



## **My brother Abdulrahman al-Sadhan ...**

My brother- an aid worker with the Red Crescent – was missing for almost 3 years. He was detained for no reason except for expressing peaceful opinions on Twitter about social justice and human rights issues. My family and I tried every possible way to find out what was going on, but we were met with a wall of silence. Now, we have received the horrible truth about how my brother will spend his life. He has been given a 20-year sentence followed by a 20-year travel ban- making him a slave of the Saudi State for the rest of his life.

It is dangerous to speak out – I have been threatened, and I know these threats are not to be taken lightly – but I will not abandon my brother, nor my conscience. The international community needs to demand a stop to these abuses. I miss my brother terribly. He is a compassionate, caring man with a passion for helping others. We just want him to be released and come back safe. He doesn't deserve to be treated like this. No one does.

**Areej al-Sadhan**





## My mother Aida al-Ghamdi ...

I fled Saudi Arabia after being threatened for campaigning against authoritarian policies in the Kingdom. I was lucky because I got out – but it is another story for my family. My mother, Aida Al-Ghamdi and two of my brothers were arrested. No explanation has ever been provided but there is no denying the truth. They were arrested not because they had committed a crime, but because of my activism. My mother is 64. She suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure. When she was arrested with my brother, they were tortured in front of each other. They were beaten and had cigarettes put out on their skin. My brother was forced to record a video denouncing me so official Saudi channels could post it on social media. I was told that any contact with my family would endanger their lives further. I am still forbidden from speaking to them. It is agony.

I have been told that the only way they will release my mother and brothers will be if I go back to Saudi Arabia and hand myself in, but I have no way to know if this is true. My mother remains detained as of November 2021 and has not yet been tried. She is in purgatory waiting for a sentence that will be full of the same abuse she has already faced. Now, I am asking the international community to show they are genuinely committed to human rights. They must demand that Saudi Arabia release my mother, brothers, and all political prisoners.

**Adbullah al-Ghamdi**



## My relative Princess Basmah ...

My relative, the Royal Princess Basmah, cousin to MBS, has been detained since March 2019. She was arrested while trying to leave KSA for a pre-approved medical treatment in Switzerland. She never made it to Switzerland, instead, she and her daughter Suhoud bint Shuja AlSharif have been arbitrarily detained ever since. Suhoud was arrested as she refused to leave her mother's side, now she remains behind bars. The Princess dared to call for constitutional reform in the Kingdom and it cost her her freedom. All I want is for her and Suhoud to be safe and receive the justice they are entitled to. Saudi Arabia cannot hold them indefinitely without charge and each day they do is a violation of the standards of law the Kingdom claims to hold themselves to.

**Name Withheld**

# THE RELEASE OF PRINCESS BASMAH

Under Article 114 of the Law of Criminal Procedure 2001 of Saudi Arabia, the accused cannot be detained for more than 180 days without a trial being scheduled. As Princess Basmah and Suhoud were detained for 1,042 days without a trial being scheduled, their detention was in clear violation of both domestic law and international law.

The reality is that MBS is not punishing Princess Basmah for fleeing the kingdom, but rather for campaigning for reform. Since 2006, Princess Basmah has written extensively on humanitarian issues, writing for several newspapers including Al-Madina, Al-Hayat, Al-Ahram Al-Masri and the magazine Al-Sayidaty. Her book, the 'Fourth Way Law', was created after a period of intense research into humanitarian problems and received accreditation from the EU Parliament in 2014 as an alternative constitution able to succeed in the 21st century. Her proposed constitution for Saudi Arabia aims to fight the causes of poverty and proposes equality between men and women. Much to the dismay of the Kingdom, the Princess continued to advocate for equality, and this is what ultimately cost her her freedom.

We thank the Saudi Government for doing the right thing and hope that today marks a step in the right direction and that MBS will release the remaining 214 prisoners of conscience who remain behind bars today. Justice is not complete until all those fighting for a better world are released.

Saudi Arabia's detention of Princess Basmah and her daughter is an affront to international law. KSA had no legal justification for detaining these women, either domestically or internationally, rendering their detention arbitrary and a violation of the country's most basic legal obligations. This injustice cost this mother and daughter nearly three years of their lives and is a stark reminder of what can happen when human rights are not respected.

**Rhianna Dorrian**, Grant Liberty Legal Officer

# WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2020?

**The systematic abuse by Saudi Arabia to prisoners of conscience has not lessened, instead, it has surged on with at least 22 new prisoners joining their predecessors in jail since our 2020 annual report. A list of these prisoners is provided at the end of our report.**

MBS has shown no sign that his repression of dissidents will slow. Alongside the continued abuse through torture, sexual assault, juvenile executions, solitary confinement, and hunger strikes described above, 2021 has seen more headlines that show that his crackdown will only continue.

## New tools to achieve MBS's 2030 vision

### 1. Sportswashing

As we showed in our renowned 'Sportswashing report', Saudi Arabia has spent over \$1.5 Billion in trying to launder its image and present itself as a hub for tourism and investment. This technique is part of MBS' strategy to achieve his 'Vision 2030' as the Kingdom is using sports to attract positive attention to the kingdom and secure the lucrative deals they desire that will free them of their dependency on oil. In 2021, this number continued to increase as the Kingdom acquired even more assets.

The theory behind sports washing is simple. Sport is loved and played around the world, it is a giant unifying force, and a multi-billion-dollar industry. By associating themselves with sport, leaders can position their country in line with the binding force of love that accompanies sports. They want to bask in the reflected glory, and thus improve their image. In Saudi Arabia's case, they want the country to be associated with elite sporting events to change their global perception from a murderous and brutal regime to a modern state.

Their most recent endeavour in this sportswashing regime is the 2021 acquisition of the Newcastle United football team. The takeover of the iconic Tyneside football club by Saudi Arabia's ruling elite is an attempt to sportswash the litany of murders, forced imprisonments, torture, and disappearances of ordinary Saudi Arabian citizens who dared criticise ruling crown Prince MBS and his leadership. This takeover means that an additional 600 million has been added to our previous figure of \$1.5 billion in acquisitions by Saudi Arabia.

## FOOTBALL IS NO BLOODSPORT





The relatives of these victims are horrified by this takeover and urge fans to stand up against a murderous regime's acquisition of their beloved team.

UK-based Abdullah al Ghamdi, who fled into exile in 2000, said: *"I, on the behalf of the many ordinary Saudi citizens suffering under the iron fist rule of Newcastle United's new owner, make a heartfelt plea to all football supporters and players at St James Park to put pressure on the Saudi Government to release all those victims of its relentless crackdown. I implore Newcastle fans and players not to become de facto apologists for the rulers in Saudi Arabia. I urge them to now use their powerful and famous voices to call from the terraces and demand Mohammed bin Salman release all prisoners of conscience and to offer proof of life for those who have disappeared."*

Areej Al Sadhan, whose brother Abdul Rahman al Sadhan was thrown in prison for daring to criticise Saudi's rulers, said: *"To every member of the Newcastle United women's football team, I say please spare a moment before your next game to remember the women of Saudi Arabia who are among the most oppressed in the world. Please remember the forgotten women currently imprisoned for daring to express their views or who are being punished to silence others."*

Abdullah al Ghamdi said *"My 64-year-old mother and brother were tortured in front of each other after they were arrested because of their relationship to me. They were severely beaten, and cigarettes were extinguished on their skin. This is the reality of life for ordinary Saudis under the new owner of your football club."*

There are many questionable ownerships of Premier League clubs, but the case of Newcastle United is undoubtedly the most shameful and an affront to decent football fans everywhere. The FA should now ask players to include innocent Saudis in their thoughts when they take the knee.

Saudi Arabia is trying to use the good reputation of the world's best-loved sports stars to obscure a human rights record of brutal-

ty, torture, and murder. The world's leading sports stars might not have asked to be part of a cynical marketing plan to distract the world from the brutality – but that's what is happening.

**Lucy Rae**, Grant Liberty Spokesperson

As Saudi Arabia tries to blind the world to their abuse through shiny purchases, we urge people to open their eyes to the reality of the abuse that accompanies these takeovers. To support these acquisitions is to deny support to those suffering behind bars at the hand of KSA. No matter how hard Saudi Arabia tries to hide their true nature, it cannot be done. Tourism and torture cannot mix.

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## 2. Continuing War on Clerics

As we showed in our renowned 'Sportswashing report', Behind MBS' commitment to modernising KSA under his 2030 vision is a horrible reality- the detention and torture of religious clerics.

Saudi Arabia is a deeply religious country, meaning that religious leaders hold a great deal of power as a result of their cultural influence on the people. Unlike journalists, few of which are in opposition to the regime due to the fear that followed the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, clerics represent a bigger threat to MBS due to their large population within KSA. Their population has steadily grown as KSA is home to a large number of religious establishments, many of which have had their place in the Kingdom for centuries.

MBS, aware of this bespoke power, began targeting the clerics of KSA and is consolidating his power through elimination- detaining anyone who speaks against him. In September 2017, just after 3 months of the appointment of MBS as crown prince, a war on clerics who don't share his vision was declared. Dozens of popular preachers and academics have been arrested and forcibly disappeared during that month, with many of them facing terror charges, only because they expressed disagreement with some of the government's decisions.

The number of his opponents has grown in response to his modernisation attempts, meaning that more and more traditionalist clerics find themselves behind bars. Although many hailed his claims to modernise the country, these changes only served MBS and his desire to become the supreme leader in the country. In November 2017, the Crown Prince intensified his war and imprisoned around 400 of the most powerful high-profile officials and members of the royal family in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Riyadh, for corruption allegations.

The arrests that targeted Islamic preachers who dared to criticise the state's policies continued during the following years, and even Saleh Al-Taleb, Imam of the Grand Mosque of Mecca, which is one of the most respected positions in KSA, was arrested in August 2018 because of a sermon during which he criticised some of the new reforms and called to speak out against evil in public.

However, despite his attempts, religious clerics have retained their authority over the people and continue to influence the people. Thus, rather than slowing as the years go by, MBS has only intensified his persecution of religious figures, 2021 has seen a new wave of detention with a new name being added to the list of prisoners every day. Simultaneously, the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs issued new regulations that prohibited any preaching activity without prior authorization from the

ministry and forbid the use of Islamic books other than those authorised by the government. These new guidelines have suffocated freedom of speech and freedom of belief in KSA, silencing the religious leaders who dare to oppose MBS.

From this onslaught of detentions, it is clear that MBS' desire for modernisation is not to improve his 'beloved' country but to increase his power and foothold in the Arab world. There is no legal basis for their detention as international law forbids any erosion of one's right to freedom of expression. Despite being bound by the arguably modern institution of international law, MBS consistently violates its obligations by arresting the clerics who oppose him, thereby creating a culture of repression among these religious leaders.

If Saudi Arabia truly wants to modernise itself, it must do so through legitimate means and not through archaic methods of unlawful detention as the cost of modernisation cannot be the freedom of civilians.

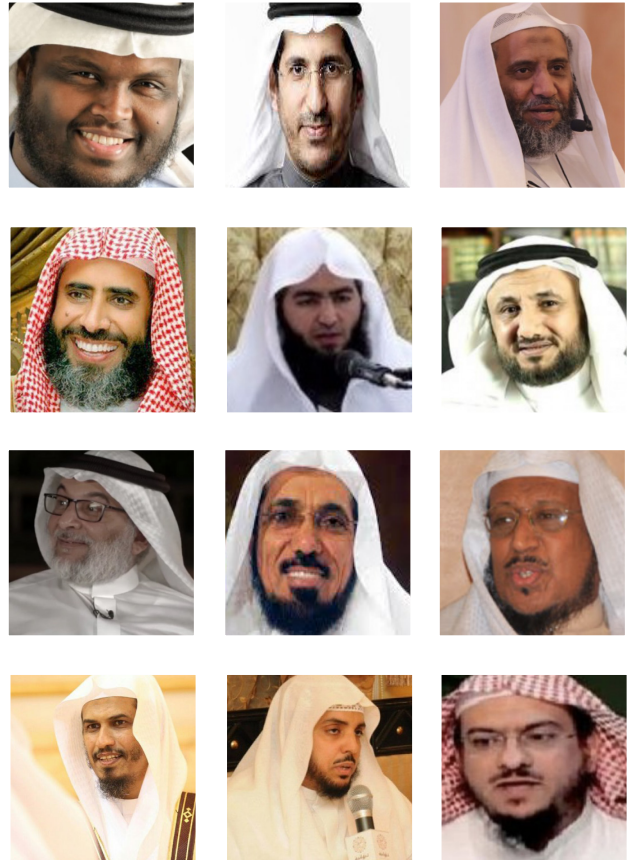
The two concepts simply cannot coexist, and MBS must make his choice; to accept the human rights obligations that accompany modernisation or cease his false attempts to modernise his country through illegitimate means.

As Saudi Arabia tries to blind the world to their abuse through shiny purchases, we urge people to open their eyes to the reality of the abuse that accompanies these takeovers. To support these acquisitions is to deny support to those suffering behind bars at the hand of KSA. No matter how hard Saudi Arabia tries to hide their true nature, it cannot be done. Tourism and torture cannot mix.

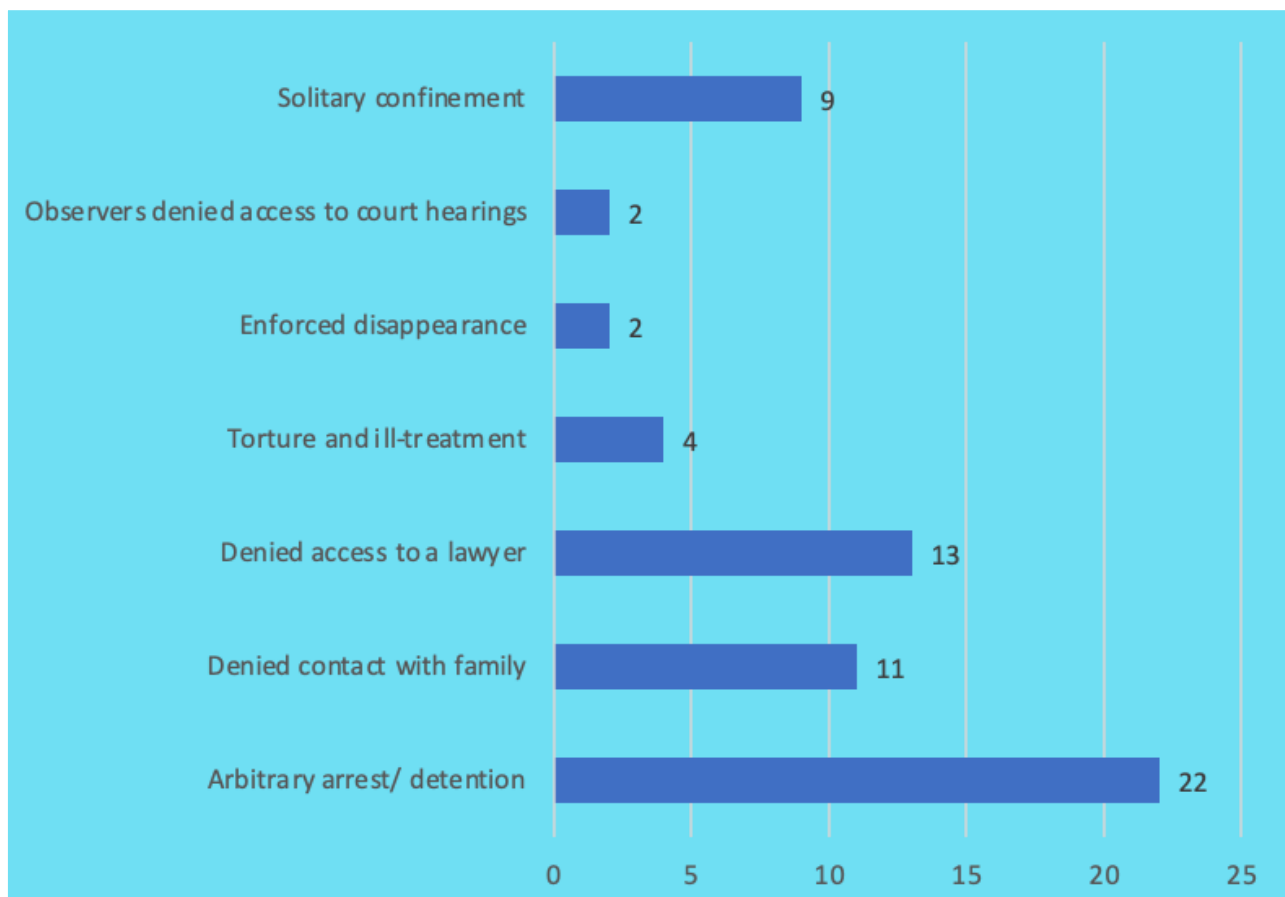
## 3. Qatar - Jailed for Not Obeying the Royal Decree to Criticise Qatar

As we showed in our renowned 'Sportswashing 5th January 2021 saw Saudi Arabia and Qatar reconcile. However, despite this reconciliation, 21 prisoners of conscience remain in Saudi prisons over their failure to back the authorities' aggressive policy towards Qatar. Despite the countries shaking hands, these prisoners remain as collateral damage that have yet to be freed, much to the surprise of the global community. A list of all prisoners currently detained for crimes relating to Qatar is provided at the end of this report.

Those in prison have suffered a range of **human rights abuses** including:



## Categories of Abuse





There were a variety of reasons conjured up by the authorities, all of which are an erosion of political thought. The reasons given include:

1. Rejection of royal orders to defame the State of Qatar.
2. Criticism of the Saudi Blockade of Qatar.
3. Calling for/Supporting the reconciliation of relationships with Qatar.
4. Relationship/membership to organisations within Qatar.
5. Collaborating with Qatar to undermine the security of Saudi Arabia.
6. Performing lectures or leading prayers outside of Saudi without the permission from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs.
7. Seeking to incite sedition and spread chaos
8. Inciting public opinion against the government
9. Breaching public security and committing crimes punishable under article 6 of the Anti-Cybercrime law
10. Going to/ communicating with Qatar without official purpose after the blockade.

No one should be imprisoned for advocating for peace and detaining these people even after the countries' reconciliation is an outrage. If Saudi Arabia wants to benefit from its reconciliation with Qatar, it must release all those who have suffered from their feud, or risk being excluded from the benefits associated with peace.

#### 4. The New Crime of Supporting Palestinians

In August 2021, a Saudi Court issued severe verdicts against 70 prisoners with Palestinian and Jordanian passports, that ranged between 6 months to 22 years behind bars, with the accusation of supporting the Palestinian resistance.

Supporting the Palestinian resistance was not considered a crime before MBS came to power, but now, MBS is extending his power to issue beyond his jurisdiction, building his alliances with Israel and ignoring the pleas of Palestinians.



There is no legal justification for their detention, either internationally or domestically.

Rhianna Dorrian, Grant Liberty Legal Officer

## Women Prisoners of Conscience

Loujain Al-Hathloul, a prominent women's rights activist and Saudi dissident was released on the 10th of February 2021 after spending 1001 days behind bars. However, it is important to remember two crucial points.



Firstly, she is free only in name and is not free in any meaningful sense. She remains under probation, under a travel ban and unable to express herself freely, with Saudi authorities forbidding her from discussing the ordeals she went through in prison.

Secondly, she is not alone. Loujain al-Hathloul is rightly feted for her fearless campaigning for women's rights. This report seeks to shine a spotlight on the women who join Loujain in the campaign for human rights in Saudi Arabia. Some are better known than others, but none enjoy the well known profile of Loujain, meaning they remain behind bars without the help of the international community. By bringing their stories to light we hope that they will be freed and be allowed to continue their fight for equality.

Loujain al-Hathloul leaves prison a hero – brutalised by the regime, but not broken. Her courage is an inspiration to us all. But she is not alone – the international community must not make the mistake of assuming that her release signals the end of the oppression of women human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia.

Until all of these women are free, the international community must not relent. It's not just Loujain – there are many other women in prison today because they fought for human rights in Saudi Arabia. They must be freed, unconditionally. Nothing else will do.

**Lucy Rae**, PR Director for Grant Liberty

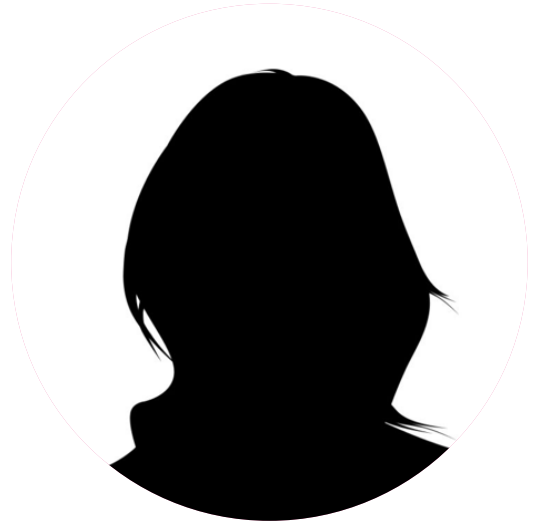
Loujain's release has been portrayed by Saudi Arabia that the matter is closed and that women activists will not be punished for speaking out. But nothing could be further from the truth. Saudi Arabia must not be allowed to sweep the abuse of these women under the carpet. As Loujain is released, her fellow activists remain behind bars, with the 2018 crackdown on women's rights activists not relenting in its repression of strong female voices in the Kingdom.

## **The Victims of the 2018 crackdown on women's rights activists**

June 24 2018 should have been a great day for women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia – it is the day that the ludicrous and outrageous ban on women driving was finally lifted. Instead, the authorities crushed any sense of progress with a brutal crackdown on the women who had led calls for reform. From May to July 2018 at least 13 activists were arrested in the Kingdom's first coordinated mass arrests of women's rights campaigners. Rather than relent, Crown Prince MBS has continued his repression of women activists with 16 confirmed prisoners of conscience behind bars today. This number only represents a fraction of those imprisoned as many prisoners go unreported.

A full index of women imprisoned is provided in the index of this report.

Details of some of these women are given below.



### **Maha al-Rafidi – arrested 28 September 2019**

Maha al Rafidi was a trainee journalist at the Saudi newspaper al-Watan at the time of her arrest in late 2019 and a human rights activist. She was arrested in a night-time raid by approximately 30 members of the Saudi security forces who were armed and hooded, and raided the family home and stole her devices, books and possessions. Shortly after she was seen with bruising to her face. She has been held for prolonged periods in solitary confinement and without charge. Her arrest is believed to be connected to tweets in support of human rights, including for the release of prisoners of conscience. As of January 2020, she was reportedly held in solitary confinement and subjected to ill-treatment at Sha'ar Prison.



### **Aisha Al- Marzooq - arrested 6 October 2017**

Human rights activist, a domestic violence survivor who fled KSA to Stockholm, Sweden. Her story inspired so many others who had felt the same pain of domestic violence. She was arrested at Riyadh airport and detained with her children upon returning to Saudi after the authorities promised her no harm if she returns. She remains imprisoned today, despite no charges being filed yet



### **Israa al-Ghomgham – arrested 8 December 2015**

Israa al-Ghmogham was threatened with the death penalty for the crime of attending a peaceful protest. As parts of the Arab World rose up during the Arab Spring, the Shia community of Saudi Arabia took to the streets. Israa al-Ghomgham was one of those who stood up for her community and spoke out against that oppression. She is accused of joining the protests and posting im-

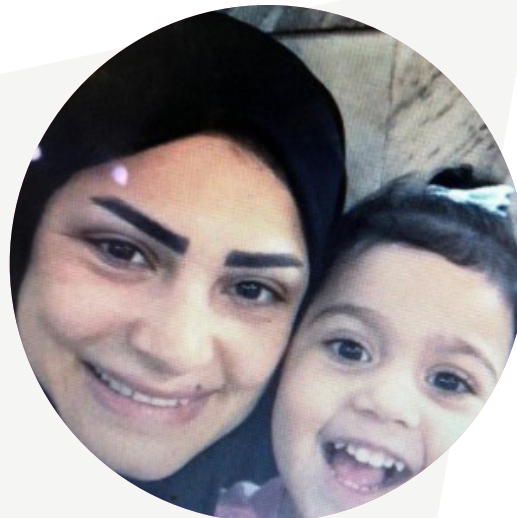


ages and videos on social media. In December 2015 – as the region was once again engulfed in protests, the Saudi Secret Police raided her family home and arrested Israa and her husband, Moussa al-Hashem. For more than three years – enduring arbitrary detention without trial – and in spite of UN demands for her release – Israa faced the death penalty. Although following international pressure, that request was dropped in 2019, Israa remains in prison.



**Naima al-Matrood – arrested 13 April 2016**

Naima has been described as an internet activist – in common with many of those arrested for campaigning in Saudi Arabia, her alleged crimes appear to boil down to protesting and calling for human rights and social justice on social media platforms. After being held without trial for a year, Naima was tried on charges including for allegedly participating in a number of anti-state demonstrations and rallies, being linked to a media cell, and violating public order by creating two social networking accounts on Twitter and Facebook to demand the release of some detainees. In November 2017 Naima was convicted and sentenced to six years in prison followed by a six year travel ban. The Gulf Centre for Human Rights reports that during her time in prison, Naima's health has deteriorated due to anaemia resulting in a degree of impairment to her vision.



**Fatima Al-Nassif – arrested 5 September 2017**

As the Qatif uprising continued in 2017, Fatima al-Nassif in September of that year was beaten and arrested by Saudi authorities, according to reports, for the 'crime' of bandaging protesters who peacefully protested. A nurse and healthcare professional. She was dragged from a car by masked men in front of her 2 young daughters. Al Nassif was arrested by masked officers belong to the intelligence police while she was in the car with her two daughters, Shahad and Batoul. The officer used excessive force hitting Alnassif's head against the car which led to a bruise on the face. Since her arrest, she has been periodically held incommunicado, resulting in a heartfelt open letter from her daughter, Shahed in which she spoke of the pain of her mother's enforced disappearance.

Sadly, the above women are just a small selection of those imprisoned with 16 women prisoners behind bars today. A comprehensive list of those imprisoned and their supposed 'crimes' is provided at the end of this report.

**As you can see, it is not just Loujain as her fellow activists remain imprisoned for fighting for their rights. Saudi Arabia cannot be allowed to pretend that this is the end of the story of the abuse of women's rights defenders when the reality is that the regime continues to imprison and abuse those who speak out.**

**As we are thankful for Loujain's release we must remember those left behind and not let her release fool the world into thinking the matter is over. All women human rights defenders must be released, not just those the kingdom wants to release to fool the international community into believing they are changing their oppressive ways. Only then will women's rights be safeguarded in a meaningful way and will justice be achieved for those who fight for a better world.**

# MASS ARREST OF JUDGES

## APRIL 2022

On the 11th of April, 2022 Saudi authorities arrested several judges for “high treason” Many of those arrested have been involved in the suppression of human rights in Saudi Arabia. Seven judges arrested were from the court that manacles terrorism charges as well as dealing with applications for decisions to be reversed. One of the judges arrested is Khalid al-Liheidan, who was responsible for ordering the imprisonment of women’s rights activist Loujain Al-Hathloul. Another is Abdulaziz al-Jaber, who decreed the execution of 81 prisoners in March this year. Grant Liberty calls on the Saudi authorities to make the legal process fair and transparent in cases of all these judges



PRISONER NAME	
Fahd bin Abdullah Al-Saghir	
Muhammad bin Misfer Al-Ghamdi	
Abdullah bin Khalid Al-Luhaidan	
Abdulaziz bin Madawi Al-Jaber	
Talal bin Abdullah Al-Humaidan.	
Nasser Al-Harbi	
Khalid bin Awaid Al-Qahtani	
Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Omar	

JUDGE POSITION	DATE OF ARREST	PROFILE SUMMARY
Appellate court	10 April 2022	He held the position of President of the Bukayriyah Court before being promoted to an appeals judge at the Court of Appeals in the Tabuk region.
Supreme Court	10 April 2022	Judge Muhammad bin Misfer Al-Ghamdi is one of the members of the Supreme Court, who was appointed by royal order issued in October 2020. Judge “Al-Ghamdi” held the position of Head of the Administrative Court in Makkah Al Mukarramah Region, and the Assistant Head of Appeal in Al Baha Region.
President of the Saudi Supreme Court.	10 April 2022	(the son of the President of the Supreme Court In December of 2020, Judge Abdullah Al-Luhaidan issued a sentence against the preacher, Dr. Youssef Al-Ahmad, to four years in prison and prevented him from leaving the country for an additional four years. , Al-Luhaidan convicted prominent women’s rights defender Loujain Alhathloul of terrorism charges.. Before Al-Luhaidan joined the Specialized Criminal Court, at least six judges from the same court were arrested in October 2017. New judges were appointed as their replacements, including Al-Luhaidan.
Specialized Criminal Court	10 April 2022	Assistant Head of the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh since 2018 Al-Jaber sentenced a minor to the death penalty.also sentenced many people to death in the mass execution of 81 detainees in 2022 September 2020, al-Jaber also presides over the trial and detention of Salman Alodah, who is being prosecuted for his peaceful speech and advocacy. He is also personally responsible for serious due process violations during that trial.
Appellate court	10 April 2022	Member of the Court of Appeal
Supreme Court	10 April 2022	Member of the Supreme Court
Supreme Court	12 April 2022	Member of the Supreme Court
Supreme Court	10 April 2022	Member of the Supreme Court

# MASS EXECUTION OF MINORITIES

In March 2022 Saudi Arabia has executed 81 men including seven Yemenis and one Syrian national, on charges including “allegiance to foreign terrorist organizations” and holding “deviant beliefs”, state news agency Saudi Press Agency said, in the largest known mass execution carried out

in the kingdom in its modern history.

“These individuals were convicted of various crimes including murdering innocent men, women and children,” as reported by the interior ministry.

The ministry also alleged that “Crimes committed by these individuals also include pledging allegiance to foreign terrorist organisations, such as ISIS [ISIL], al-Qaeda and the Houthis,”

The men included 37 Saudi nationals who were found guilty in a single case for attempting to assassinate security officers and targeting police stations and convoys, the report added.

The country’s previous mass execution took place in January 2016, when the kingdom executed 47 people, including a prominent opposition Shia leader who had rallied demonstrations in the kingdom.

In 2019, the kingdom beheaded 37 Saudi citizens, most of them minority Shia, in a mass execution across the country for alleged “terrorism”-related crimes.

‘We’ve punished other nations for much smaller crimes, yet we continue to support Saudi Arabia with various means of support including arms, intelligence and even normal trading in the United Kingdom and the USA in the domestic market – are we really that desperate for the Saudi dollar?’

Said Lucy Rae  
Grant Liberty.





## **MUSTAFA BIN HASHIM BIN ISA AL-DARWISH**

was executed on Tuesday 14th of June 2022  
after he was arrested in 2015

An 'offensive' photo was found on his phone following anti-government protests  
When he was 17, he was caught up in Arab Spring protests with Shi'ite minority  
He later said he confessed to the crimes under torture to make beatings  
stop. His family discovered he had been put to death after reading  
news report online

# WHAT MUST BE DONE? CHANGE IS COMING

Saudi Arabia faces an uncertain future under MBS. As the world transitions away from fossil fuels, the Kingdom must do the same and resile from its dependence on oil. MBS articulated this desire in his 'Vision 2030' which strives to diversify the Kingdom's domestic output into green technologies and large-scale tourism.

To do this vision, MBS began an unprecedented PR campaign to launder their reputation and attract the necessary tourism and investment. Saudi Arabia's desire for investment means it is sensitive to its global reputation which in turn provides an unprecedented opportunity to force progressive change in the Kingdom.

**We have seen that external pressure can and will work.**

The release of Loujain Al-Hathloul, prominent women's rights activist, is just one example of the ability of external pressure to secure change. In the wake of COP26,

the world is strengthening its commitment to change, leaving KSA vulnerable and its image more important than ever. We must capitalise on this and use it to free the prisoners of conscience that languish behind bars for daring to want a better world.

The lesson to activists is clear - now is the time to redouble our efforts. Saudi Arabia cannot succeed in a post-oil economy if it remains a social pariah and loses the foreign investment and tourism they are so desperately seeking. The Kingdom's rulers are more susceptible to political lobbying than ever before. For MBS and the Saudi regime, our message is clear - change is coming. Now is the time to do the right thing. Your economy, your national strategy and your regime will not survive growing international disgust at the abuses you inflict on your own people. Acting now is in your own interests.

**Free your prisoners of conscience before it is too late. If not, the international community will treat you as the pariah you are.**

# INDEX OF NEW PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE DETAINED IN 2022

Abdulaziz Al-Hamidi

Asma Al-Sibaii

Najlaa Al-Marwan

Abdullah Al-Mobarki

Fahed Al-Ajlan

Omar Al-Saadoun (released)

Abdullah Al-Shahry

Kassem Al-Kathrady

Rachid Al-Almaey

Abdullah Gelan

Lina Al-Sharif

Reina AbdulAziz

AbdulRahman Al-Daweish

Loujain Daghistani (released)

Samir Halawani

AbdulRahman Al-Sheikhi

Mohamad Al-Ghidani

Yasmine Al Ghufaili

Ali Abou-Lhoum

Mohamad Al-Hazimi

Omar Shiboba

Ali Al-Almaey

Mohamad Kadwan

# INDEX OF PRISONERS DETAINED FOR OFFENCES RELATING TO QATAR

PRISONER NAME ENGLISH	PRISONER GROUP	STATUS	INTRO	LINK TO QATAR
Abdul mohsen Al-Ahmad	Academic	In Prison	Senior specialist in anaesthesia treatment at King Fahad Medical City in Riyadh. Islamic preacher, lecturer, and writer with published books and large following on social media.	He was charged with refusing to attack Qatar and disobeying the ruler.
Adel Banaima	Academic	In Prison	Dean of the Institute for Teaching Arabic, Professor and Member of the Faculty of Umm Al-Qura University, and a Poet, writer, and popular Islamic preacher. In March 2019, he was named by The Guardian as one of several journalists tortured in detention. he was also the editor of the monthly cultural magazine and an influential presenter on several TV and radio programs	Charges related to breaking media laws of using platforms and channels belonging to the Saudi authorities for communicating with Qatari listeners and audiences and violating the ruler's orders of boycotting – Basically took calls on shows from listeners in Qatar and responded to them on social media. He was initially sentenced to 4 years behind bars, but the sentence was increased to 6 years in December 2021
Khaled al-Mahoush	Academic	In Prison	Ex-Municipality committee member and freelance writer, columnist, and lecturer. influential media personality and initiator of numerous charity organisations. Spoke out about community issues and corruption in KSA.	His refusal to join the media campaign against Qatar.
Mohammed Abdul Aziz Al-Khudairi	Academic	In Prison	A preacher and writer. Chairman of the Institutes for Consulting Centre, and Assistant Professor at King Saud University, Riyadh. Has published many books on Islam and popular guest on Islamic TV shows. Has over half a million followers on Twitter.	His rejection of royal orders to defame the State of Qatar. The Public Prosecution charged him with breaking out of the ruler, giving a Friday sermon in the State of Qatar
Mohammed al Barrak	Academic	In Prison	Influential (300K followers) Professor of Postgraduate Studies at Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah.	His rejection of directives from the royal court to attack Qatar. Showing solidarity with those arrested on 12 September 2017 and calling for reconciliation with Qatar.



Yousef al-Ahmad	Academic	In Prison	Assistant professor at Al-Imam University in Riyadh. Was previously arrested and sentenced to 5 years for speaking out against arresting women protesting in front of the ministry of the interior but was then shortly released by a Royal Pardon.	Al-Ahmad was accused of travelling to Qatar to attend a conference and meet officials there without official permission from the Kingdom's government, and his defence of Qatar and its ruler, after the boycott was announced. Tried in secret courts and charged with issuing dubious fatwas among other accusations. Sentenced on 31 December 2020 to 4 years in prison, followed by 4 years of travel ban.
Rabee Hafez	Artist	In Prison	Saudi music composer and singer	The Saudi authorities claim that he indicated in a tweet on the social networking site "Twitter" that he supports Qatar and is against the blockade. Reportedly charged with links to the "Muslim Brotherhood". He was sentenced to 3 years in prison on 10 September 2020.
Mohamed al-Otaibi	Human Rights Activist	In Prison	He has been on multiple Hunger-strikes since. He demands a transfer from Dammam Prison to Jeddah, where they live, and for proper medical care for his high blood pressure and better treatment and living conditions.	Al-Otaibi was arrested in Hamad International Airport in Qatar while he was on his way to Norway, then deported to Saudi. On 14 October 2019 charges sheets were handed to Al-Otaibi including "going to Qatar" and "interfering in public affairs". Sentenced to 14 years in prison followed by 14 years of travel ban.
Yousuf al-Mulhem	Human Rights Activist	In Prison	Activist and Satirist is known for his sarcastic tweets. Has 171k followers on Twitter. He wasn't particularly involved in politics.	Was arrested after a tweet in which he wished for peace after the news of conflict between the Saudi Crown Prince and Qatari Emir
Abdul rahman Farhanah	Journalist	In Prison	Farhana covered political and religious issues that have become increasingly sensitive in Saudi Arabia. He is known for his support of the Palestinian resistance.	He wrote for Al-Jazeera's website; after the Saudi authorities banned the Qatari broadcaster in the kingdom. Reportedly accused of supporting terrorist organizations.
Ahmad al-Sawian	Journalist	In Prison	He has a Bs Degree in Chemistry and works as chief editor in Albayan magazine and the president of Islamic Press Association.	Arrested for his links to Qatar. The Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him to three years in jail in September 2020 on charges related to his freedom of expression.
Ali Abu al-Hassan	Journalist	Released December 2021	Islamic cleric and preacher who started as a teacher before his media appearances and eventually started hosting his own Islamic shows and publishing Islamic books focusing on spirituality.	He was asked to join the media war against Qatar but refused and it is believed to be the reason for his arrest.

Ali al-Omari	Journalist	Facing Death Penalty	One of the most popular Islamic personalities in the Arab world. Journalist, TV channel director and broadcast host.	Over 30 charges included in them were “espionage activities” and “working for foreign agencies against the security, interests, way of life, resources and communal peace of the kingdom with the aim of stirring up dissent and damaging the fabric of society.” Related to Qatar – in addition to the usual “Disobeying the ruler” over his refusal to attack Qatar.
Bader al-Ibrahim	Journalist	Released	Bader al-Ibrahim, a dual U.S.-Saudi citizen, was one of a group of journalists detained in April 2019 who did not appear to be active in the last couple of years. In his writings, al-Ibrahim is an advocate for Arab nationalism and opposes political Islam, due to what he sees as its potential to deepen sectarian divides. Al-Ibrahim had also been active with the movement to end the ban on women driving, according to The New York Times and Reuters.	No official charges but he is 1 of 3 persons to be arrested who wrote for Qatari-funded, UK-based outlet Al-Arabi al-Jadeed (The New Arab). According to an April 5, 2019, article in The Washington Post, the U.S. Department of State was aware of al-Ibrahim’s arrest and was providing consular services.
Essam al-Zamel	Journalist	In Prison	Ex-Aramco economist, Blogger, Businessperson with over 800k followers - Expressed his support for human rights and liberties. Known for criticising MBS economic vision.	Several news outlets reported that his arrest appears to be connected to a series of tweets in which he criticised the proposed initial public offering (IPO) for the Saudi Aramco oil company. However, what was on his official charge sheet was “Communicating with a Qatari figure after the Doha boycott”, among other charges. Was sentenced to 15 years in prison on 4 October 2020.
Mohammed al-Sadiq	Journalist	In Prison	One of several journalists detained in April 2019, Mohammed al-Sadiq wrote about politics, economics, and sectarianism.	No official charges but he is the second person to be arrested who wrote for Qatari-funded, UK-based outlet Al-Arabi al-Jadeed (The New Arab).
Sami al-Thubaiti	Journalist	In Prison	Young journalist from Mecca who has a reasonable following on Twitter. He wrote for Alrasd newspaper and showed support for reconciliation between KSA and Qatar on social media.	Believed to be arrested because of his tweet “The disagreement between the brothers has no victor, everyone is a loser”. Referring to the Saudi / Qatar conflict

Thumar al-Marzouqi	Journalist	Released	Saudi blogger and columnist Thumar al-Marzouqi was one of several journalists arrested by Saudi authorities in April 2019	No official charges but he is the third person to be arrested who wrote for Qatari-funded, UK-based outlet Al-Arabi al-Jadeed (The New Arab). He was released on 3 April 2021 without charges.
Ali Badahdah	Religious Figures	In Prison	Professor of Hadith and teaching member at King Abdul Aziz University, preacher, and Islamic thinker, founding member of a large number of Islamic societies and charities with a large social media following.	His refusal to attack the Qatari regime. The Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him to 6 years in prison on 14 October 2020. Official charges were not legally declared. Sentences were increased to 9 years in December 2021.
Ibrahim al-Harhi	Religious Figures	In Prison	Islamic cleric is known for his controversial sermon against racism and unconscious bias in Islamic teaching and was forbidden from giving any since 2014.	Believed to have been arrested for his refusal to attack the Qatari state on his social media accounts. The Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him to 5 years in prison on 28 August 2020. The sentence was increased to 8 years in November 2021, as it was nearing an end.
Mohammed Abdullah AlHabdan	Religious Figures	In Prison	Teacher and professor of jurisprudence, and the imam of the Al-Ezz Bin Abdul Salam Mosque in Riyadh.	His refusal to attack the Qatari regime. He was charged with several charges, including sympathy with the Muslim Brotherhood, sympathy with detained women who called for their arbitrarily detained husbands, and giving lectures outside Saudi Arabia without permission from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs
Salman al-Odah	Religious Figures	Facing Death Penalty	An iconic religious reformer and one of Saudi Arabia's leading Islamic thinkers.	His detention followed a sharp exchange of words in which Dr al-Odah argued that he was being arrested illegally, and security officers made clear that the reason for his arrest was a Twitter post in which he had welcomed a phone conversation between the Emir of Qatar and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia as a step towards resolving the current Gulf crisis. In it he said: "Praise the Lord... O God, soften their hearts toward each other for the good of their peoples."
Walid al-Huwairini	Religious Figures	In Prison	Islamic Scholar, Academic, Researcher and Media personality.	Arrested under the pretext of not participating in the campaign against Qatar, and not supporting Crown Prince "Mohammed bin Salman" in his directions.

# WOMEN PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

PRISONER NAME	PRISONER STATUS	PROFILE SUMMARY	PROFESSION	DATE OF ARREST	FOCUS
Zana al-Shehri	In Prison	A Saudi journalist and human rights activist	Journalist	16 November 2019	Calling for reform in KSA
Sarah Al-Jabri	In Prison	Daughter of former KSA Official Saad Al-Jabri	Student	Late 2020	Blackmail, father's influence in Canada
Asma Al-Sibaii	In Prison	A young university student, she was arrested on 2 June 2021 due to her activity on social media. Abducted by authorities from her family's house in Riyadh	Student	2 June 2021	Several de-fence right in
Naima al-Matrood	In Prison	A regular Saudi citizen. She was summoned to report to the directorate having been arrested firstly on 23/2/16.	Unknown	13 April 2016	Alleged protest
Lina Al-Sharif	In Prison	A physician who was arrested during May 2021 due to her human rights activism	Physician, Human rights activist	1 May 2021	Human social n
Maha Al-Rafidi	In Prison	A Saudi journalist and human rights activist. During the night-time, approximately thirty Saudi Arabian officials, including armed and hooded men and those in military uniform, raided the home of a family member of Maha's where she was staying. They seized Maha and took her to her home nearby, where forces entered the building and took Maha's devices, books and possessions.	Journalist	28 September 2019	Her Freedom activism
Najlaa Al-Marwan	In Prison	Human rights activist, blogger and single mother. Abducted from her house by authorities.	Human rights activist	20 July 2021	Calling for reform
Israa Al-Ghamgham	In Prison		Human rights activist	1 January 2016	Joining the resistance



REASONS OR ARREST	CHARGES	VERDICT	VERDICT DATE
g for re-forms in	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
ailing their to comeback from a to KSA	Suspicious Monetary Transactions and Money Laundering	6 years and a half in prison fol-lowed by 6 years and a half travel ban	23-Apr-21
tweets and posts ding wom-en's Saudi Arabia	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
dly in taking part in s	Alleged of-fence of tak- ing part in peaceful pro- test in Eastern Province between 2011-2015	Six years in prison and six-year travel ban	16 April 2017
rights activism on media	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
e speech and m.	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
for pro-tests ask- reforms in KSA	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
Al-Qatif demon- ns	Charges re-lated to ter- rorism and causing chaos in KSA.	8 years in pris-on	10-Feb-21

Fatima Al-Nassif	In Prison	A nurse and healthcare professional. She was dragged from a car by masked men in front of her 2 young daughters. Al Nassif was arrested by masked officers belonging to the intelligence police while she was in the car with her two daughters, Shahad and Batoul. The officer used excessive force hitting Al-nassif's head against the car which led to a bruise on the face.	Nurse	5 Sep-tember 2017	Her hu ism
Aisha al-marzooq	In Prison	Human rights activist, a domestic violence survivor who fled KSA to Stockholm, Sweden. Arrested at Riyadh airport and detained with her children upon returning to Saudi, after the authorities promised her no harm if she returns.	Human rights activ-ist	6 October 2017	She fle chil-dr due to lence, many
Aida al-Ghamdi	In Prison	mother of the activist Abdullah al-Ghamidi who lives in exile. Arrested with use of excessive force in the street with her youngest son Adel	--	28 March 2018	Puttin son wh stop h
Reina Ab-dulAziz	In Prison	A 20 year old blogger who was arrested during May 2021 campaign that target-ed human rights activists	Human rights activ-ist	13 May 2021	Huma social
Yasmine Al Ghufaili	In Prison	A young human rights activist, ar-rested during May 2021 campaign on bloggers	Human rights activ-ist	17 May 2021	Huma social

uman rights activ-	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
ed KSA with her en after di-vorce domestic vio- her sto-ry inspired women	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
g pres-sure on her no lives in exile to is activism	Receiving money from her dissi-dent son Abdul- lah in London	No ver-dict yet	
n rights activism on media	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	
n rights activism on media	Not charged yet	No ver-dict yet	



If you wish to obtain legal help, contact our legal officer Rhianna Dorrian.  
For all media requests and interviews contact Lucy Rae