

**BY AIRMAIL**

King and Prime Minister  
King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud  
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques  
Office of His Majesty the King  
Royal Court, Riyadh  
**KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA**

**Amsterdam, 7 November 2014**

**Subject: 5-8 years imprisonment of three lawyers Al- Subaihi, Alnogaithan and Al- Rumaih and arrest of Al-Shammary**

Your Majesty,

In this letter the Dutch Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation (L4L) would like to express our grave concerns about the 5 to 8 years imprisonment and travel and media bans of our colleagues, human rights lawyers, Mr Abdulrahman Al- Subaihi, Mr Bander Alnogaithan, and Mr Abdulrahman Al- Rumaih. Furthermore, we would like to take this opportunity to also express our concern about the arrest of lawyer Ms. Souad al-Shammary on October 28.

1. Abdulrahman Al- Subaihi is a lawyer and former professor at Saudi Arabia High Judicial Institute. He is also a board member of the Institute's Judicial Assembly.
2. Bander Alnogaithan is a lawyer and a former lecturer at Dar Al Uloom University.
3. Abdulrahman Al- Rumaih is a former judge at the General Court in Riyadh and currently working as a lawyer.

The three human rights defenders advocate for the independence of the judiciary, through the use of social media platforms. The three lawyers were sentenced on charges including "insulting the judiciary" and "prejudicing public order" via Twitter

According to the information L4L received was Abdulrahman Al- Subaihi sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment and a further 10-year travel ban on charges relating to "interfering with the ruler's competencies", "sabotaging Saudi Arabia's foreign policy", "insulting the judiciary" and "inciting against judges" via Twitter. Bander Alnogaithan and Abdulrahman Al- Rumaih were sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment and a further 7-year travel ban for charges including "insulting the judiciary" and "interfering with its competencies". All three were banned from making media appearances or using social media platforms.

4. Ms. Souad al-Shammary was arrested while attending a first interrogation session at the Bureau of Investigation in Jeddah. Al-Shammari has been interrogated for tweets she published on her Twitter account and she currently faces charges including "calling upon society to disobey by describing society as masculine" as well as "using sarcasm while mentioning religious texts and religious scholars." We received the concerning information that Souad Al-Shammari's lawyer was prevented from attending interrogation sessions and was not able to see the interrogation report. Furthermore, Al-Shammari seems to have been verbally abused by the investigator who told her "now the society will get rid of your evils."

We would like to draw your attention to the implementation of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. In particular in this case the applicability of paragraphs 16 and 17 of these Basic Principles. According to paragraph 16, the government is under an obligation “*to ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference*”. Paragraph 17 states that “*where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities*”.

It follows from paragraph 23 that “*Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action of their membership in a lawful organization.*”

These principles are universally applicable. The imprisonment of Abdulrahman Al- Subaihi, Bander Alnogaithan, and Abdulrahman Al- Rumaih is a violation of these principles. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Abdulrahman Al- Subaihi, Bander Alnogaithan, Abdulrahman Al- Rumaih, and Souad al-Shammary to drop all charges, to ensure their personal and professional safety and to enable them to carry out their professional duties while not being intimidated, restricted or hindered in doing so.

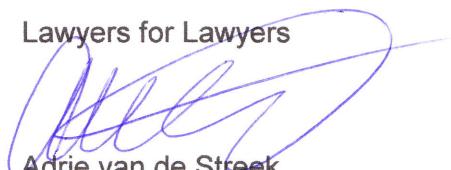
Furthermore we urge you to guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

We would like to thank you for your attention for this very important matter. We will continue to closely monitor this case and I kindly request you to keep us informed on any developments on the cases of Mr Abdulrahman Al- Subaihi, Mr Bander Alnogaithan, Mr Abdulrahman Al- Rumaih, and Ms. Souad al-Shammary.

On behalf of the President of Lawyers for Lawyers, Phon van den Biesen,

Sincerely,

Lawyers for Lawyers



Adrie van de Streek  
Executive director Lawyers for Lawyers

Letters concerning the same topic were also sent to:

- Minister of the Interior - Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
- Minister of Justice - Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulkareem Al-Issa
- Ambassador in The Hague - Professor Walid Abdul Karim Khereiji
- Consul in Geneva - Mr Nabil Ben Mohamed Al-Saleh
- Ambassador of the Netherlands in Riyad - Ambassador Mr. Westhoff