

15 April 2020

## **Saudi Arabia: Imprisoned human rights defender Abdullah Al-Hamid in critical condition**

On 9 April 2020, human rights defender **Abdullah Al-Hamid** suffered a stroke whilst detained in Al-Ha'ir maximum security prison in Riyadh. He is currently in a coma and has been hospitalised.

[Abdullah Al-Hamid](#) is a founding member of the NGO Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). On 9 March 2013, the Riyadh Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him to five years' imprisonment, in addition to confirming a previous six year sentence for his involvement in establishing ACPRA. The list of charges against Abdullah Al-Hamid included destabilising security; spreading chaos; violating public safety; the fragmentation of national unity; the destruction of the capabilities of the nation and its gains; planting the seeds of discord and dissent; and publishing information on the Internet related to his interrogation.

Abdullah al-Hamid is currently in critical health following a stroke. Doctors had previously informed the human rights defender of the urgent need for a heart catheterisation, but the operation had been delayed for several months by the Al-Ha'ir prison administration. The operation was due to take place in late May or early June. Abdullah Al-Hamid was not allowed to remain in hospital to await the operation. On 9 April 2020, he suffered a stroke in prison and entered into a coma. He has been hospitalised since then.

Abdullah Al-Hamid has frequently been banned from calling his family, and family visits to the Al-Ha'ir prison are regularly cancelled. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, his access to phone calls has been restricted even further. The defender has been detained in poor, unhealthy conditions which have previously led him to go on a hunger strike.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the critical health condition of human rights defender Abdullah Al-Hamid, which appears to be linked to the poor conditions of detention and the denial of adequate medical care by the prison authorities. Front Line Defenders reiterates its concerns over the targeting of Abdullah Al-Hamid for his peaceful human rights activities.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Saudi Arabia to:**

1. Urgently provide the necessary medical treatment for Abdullah Al-Hamid;
2. Immediately and unconditionally release Abdullah Al-Hamid and quash his conviction as Front Line Defenders believes that he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate human rights work;
3. Ensure that the treatment of Abdullah Al-Hamid, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the *'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons*

*under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment'*, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

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