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Another Former Detainee Passed Away





ANOTHER FORMER DETAINEE PASSED AWAY

The former political prisoner Mohammad Abdullah Hasan Yaackoub (Al-Aali) died on 5 July 2023. Mohammad was arrested on 15 September 2015 over political reasons, then sentenced to life.

During detention, he was subjected to severe torture, electrocuted, medically neglected. Due to the miserable conditions in the prison, Mohammad showed several symptoms, including blood coming out of his mouth, however, he was denied access to real medical treatment.

A year after suffering from the aforementioned symptoms, he was infected with Covid 19. He was transferred to "Al-Salmaniya" Medical Complex over his deteriorating health where doctors diagnosed his lung cancer. Mohammad had already suffered from osteoporosis and yeast deficiency. On 5 August 2021, Mohammad was temporarily released due to his health conditions. He then started his medication trip.

The tragic death of Mohammad sparked renewed calls for the release of Bahraini political prisoners, especially those who suffer from permanent health conditions, such as the detainee Habib Ali Al-Fardan. Habib suffers an enlarged tumor in his brain caused by the deprivation of Jaw Prison administration from completing his treatment.

Al-Fardan was re-arrested on 12 May 2023, three months after his return from Germany, where he went to undergo a very dangerous surgery. He then was denied access to complete his medication. Moreover, all calls for his release due to his deteriorating health were unmet. Habib is sentenced over multiple cases to more than 75 years imprisonment.



Another prisoner whose case was brought back to the fore is Mohammad Hassan Al-Raml. Mohammad underwent during July a hunger strike, which lasted around a month, protesting against medical negligence. He lost consciousness during the month at least 4 times due to the drop of sugar level in blood. Al-Raml was also cut off from the outside world for 17 days.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS' VIOLATIONS

As previous years, Ashura season witnessed a number of violations including attacking Ashura manifestations and arresting citizens over their participation in religious rites. Multiple areas in the kingdom were raided during Ashura to remove any Ashura or black banners.

Between 21 and 31 July, several areas including Al Markh village, the town of Aali, Ghuraifa, were raided. During those raids, a group of citizens gathered to protest and confront operatives from the interior ministry who were removing the Ashura banners. The security forces then arrested them and released them a few hours later.

Moreover, on 28 July, Ali Hussein Al-Najjar was detained for a week pending an investigation. Al-Najjar was picked up while handing out water to people taking part in Ashura mourning ceremonies. And in late July, Sheikh Mahmoud Al-Aali was summoned for interrogation over his speech during Ashura commemorations.



ARRESTS OVER PARTICIPATION IN FUNERAL CEREMONIES

The participation in the funeral procession for the former detainee Mohammad Abdullah Hasan Yaackoub was considered a crime according to the Bahraini authorities. Despite the restrictions imposed on the funeral procession, a group of citizens were surprised to be summoned and then arrested over their participation.

The group included the activist Ali Muhanna, Abdulmajeed Abdulla Hasan, Mohammad Mohammad, Munir Mushaima, Hussein Munir and Youssef Nabil. They were arrested for several days before being freed.

After their release, the activist Ali Muhanna uploaded a video showing red spots appearing all over his body due to poor hygiene. He wondered what happens to those who have been imprisoned for years in such detention centers.

On the other hand, some citizens were arrested upon their arrival from religious trips. Mohammad Issa Al-Hanan was returning from the Hajj pilgrimage when being arrested at the crossing border between Bahrain and KSA. In addition, Hussein Hani was arrested along the causeway linking Bahrain with Saudi Arabia as he returned from a religious pilgrimage in Iraq. However, Ammar Al-Moamen was arrested upon leaving Bahrain. Al-Moamen's brother Ali was killed by the kingdom's security forces during pro-democracy protests in 2011. Three of his brothers were jailed in 2017.



17 EXECUTION CARRIED OUT IN KSA DURING JULY

In an official response to a United Nations Human Rights Council report criticizing death sentences for three men connected to the Neom mega project, Saudi authorities claimed that the three men were terrorists.

The 27-page letter confirmed that Shadli bin Ahmad Al-Huwaiti, Ibrahim bin Salih Al-Huwaiti, and Atallah bin Moussa Al-Huwaiti had been sentenced to death and that this decision was upheld at the Court of Appeal. The decision is now "pending" before the Supreme Court, according to the letter.

The death sentences were previously criticized by the United Nations Human Rights Council. "Under international law, states that have not yet abolished the death penalty may only impose it for the 'most serious crimes', involving intentional killing," the experts said. "We do not believe the actions in question meet this threshold."

However, the kingdom didn't listen to any of those calls, and kept on carrying out executions. During July 2023, the Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR) monitored 17 executions, which brought the total of executions during 2023 to 78.

Most executions that were carried out in the kingdom were performed after unfair trials. Some were politically motivated such as the cases of Ali Bin Saleh Al-Jomaa and Moslem Bin Hussein Abu Chahen. The two were executed on 16 July after fabricating terrorist charges against them.



UK GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO ROLL OUT THE RED CARPET TO HOST MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN

Activists and human rights organizations have expressed outrage at the decision of the UK Government to roll out the red carpet to host Mohammed Bin Salman.

“The UK mustn’t choose economic expedience or validate the Saudi government’s public relations on rights in pursuit of a trade deal. No visit or trade deal should take place without the necessary human rights improvements, particularly labor rights, to ensure that trade with the UK is not tainted by the Saudi government’s abuses,” Human Rights Watch said.

Moreover, the Guardian commented on the decision saying that “the UK has now invited Saudi Arabia’s crown prince and de facto leader, Mohammed bin Salman, whom the CIA believe approved the murder of Jamal Khashoggi despite his denials, for an official visit... Riyadh has spent heavily on influence operations and brand management, investing in sportswashing and entertainment.”



CALLS ON JORDAN HENDERSON TO MEET HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

After Liverpool agreed a deal to sell their captain Jordan Henderson to Saudi Pro League side Al-Ettifaq, several calls popped up urging Henderson to speak out against human rights abuses in the kingdom.

Critics including Amnesty considered that Saudi authorities seeks to sportswash the country's international reputation by luring world football stars to the Pro League, with Karim Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo amongst the most prominent players to have moved.

“Coming shortly after Steven Gerrard’s move to Al-Ettifaq, this looks very much like more Saudi sportswashing as huge amounts of Saudi wealth continues to pour into the purchase of star players, new events and even the acquisition of entire clubs,” said Amnesty’s UK economic affairs director, Peter Frankental.

“With every major signing Saudi Arabia is seemingly ratcheting up its sportswashing effort, with the overall strategy apparently one where Mohammed Bin Salman’s Saudi Arabia is increasingly associated with sport and entertainment, not repression and human rights abuse,” he added.

Moreover, the Advocacy Director of DAWN, Raed Jarrar sees that “as more Saudi human rights abuses come to light, many American businesses, celebrities, sports stars and institutions may find themselves silenced, much like Saudi citizens, in deference to their benefactor.”



YouTube

YOUTUBE SHUTS DOWN YEMENIS CHANNELS

In a flagrant violation of freedom of speech and expression, Youtube closed 18 channels of the Yemeni Military Media, the Ansar Allah band, the artistic and documentary production unit, and Rawdat Al-Shuhada.

This arbitrary step serves as another tool of war against Yemenis. The closed channels had more than 500 thousand subscribers with more than 7 thousand videos and more than 90 million views.

The channels shut down revealed the extent of global complicity in targeting the Yemeni People and conspiring against their cause and oppression. National pages, accounts, and channels pertaining to Yemen have been previously subjected to constant closure, ban, and restrictions without any justification.

MORE VICTIMS DUE TO EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS

Although military operations have decreased dramatically in Yemen, dozens are still being killed due to explosive remnants or Saadah Border shooting operations. According to the Ministry of Public Health and Population, the actions of the Saudi armies at the border governorate of Saadah claimed 2227 victims since the beginning of truce. It stated that 293 people were killed and 1934 injured.

On the other hand, the Executive Center for Mine Action documented that 150 victims were killed and wounded by explosive remnants in various governorates during July. It added that more than 9500 citizens were killed or wounded during the 8 years of war.



RESTRICTIONS ON SANAA AIRPORT CONTINUE

The Ministry of Public Health and Population in Yemen observed that the restriction of Sanaa International Airport to one destination (Jordan) and the limited flights exacerbate the humanitarian crisis and the suffering of patients.

“Only 10% of the patients who cannot be treated in Yemen are able to travel,” the head of the Supreme Medical Committee, Dr. Mutahar Al-Darwish explained. “60,000 patients who cannot be treated in Yemen are registered in the Supreme Medical Committee and the same number in medical centers, and the number is increasing with the continuation of the blockade,” he added.

One victim of those restrictions was Mariam Hammoud Hadi, who died in the aforementioned airport when she was waiting for her flight. Mariam’s health deteriorated due to the difficulties she faced in obtaining reservations and the delay in her travel amid the siege imposed on Sanaa Airport.

The Undersecretary of Civil Aviation, Raed Jabal, confirmed that three or six flights per week from Sanaa Airport do not serve the minimum needs of the Yemenis. Moreover, the director of Sanaa Airport, Khaled Al-Shayef, explained that there is a real tragedy for patients who need to travel for medical treatment. “Thousands of sick citizens are in urgent need of travel and there are more travelers stuck in Jordan and other countries who could not get reservations,” he added.