

Advocacy dossier

Mohammed al-Bejadi

محمد البجادي

Imprisoned (serving sentence) **Saudi Arabia**

Mohammed al-Bejadi is a Saudi human rights defender and a founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA) who has been detained since May 2018. Although his prison term expired in April 2023, he was retried and on 27 October 2025 sentenced by the Specialised Criminal Court to a further 25 years, and he remains in Buraydah Prison.

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The case at a glance

Mohammed al-Bejadi is a Saudi human rights defender and a founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA) who has been detained since May 2018. Although his prison term expired in April 2023, he was retried and on 27 October 2025 sentenced by the Specialised Criminal Court to a further 25 years, and he remains in Buraydah Prison.

Status **Imprisoned (serving sentence)**	Arrested **24 May 2018**	Country **Saudi Arabia**

Sentence A further 25 years' imprisonment (Specialised Criminal Court, 27 October 2025), after a 10-year term with five years suspended, imposed in March 2015 and fully served by April 2023.

Charges Participating in establishing a human rights organisation (2012 conviction)
Harming the image of the state through the media (2012 conviction)
Calling on families of political detainees to protest and hold sit-ins (2012 conviction)
Contesting the independence of the judiciary (2012 conviction)
Possessing banned books (2012 conviction)

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Release Mohammed al-Bejadi immediately and unconditionally.

02 Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

03 Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

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How the case unfolded

4 September 2007

Arrest

Detained without charge and held in solitary confinement

He was arrested and held in solitary confinement without charge or trial. GCHR reports that he was detained after speaking to international media about a sit-in calling for the release of political prisoners.

January 2008

Release

Released after about four months in detention

He was released in January 2008 without having been charged or tried, after about four months in detention.

21 March 2011

Re-arrest

Arrested after joining a protest in Riyadh

He was arrested in Buraydah, a day after joining a protest by families of detainees outside the Ministry of Interior in Riyadh, where he said that all prisoners of conscience were his family.

August 2011

Referral to trial

Put on trial before the Specialised Criminal Court

His trial opened before the Specialised Criminal Court in Riyadh, a court set up for security offences. His lawyers were denied access to him throughout and were refused entry to the hearings.

11 March 2012

Hunger strike begins

Begins hunger strike in detention

He was reported to have begun a hunger strike on 11 March 2012 and to have stopped taking water on 7 April. The Interior Ministry said on 10 April that he was not on hunger strike.

10 April 2012

Conviction

Sentenced to four years after a secret trial

The Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him in a secret session, without his family or lawyers being informed, to four years in prison and a five-year travel ban, on charges including participating in establishing a human rights organisation and harming the image of the state through the media.

March 2015

Retrial ordered

Re-sentenced to 10 years, five of them suspended

After the first ruling was overturned on appeal and a second trial began in August 2013, the Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him to 10 years in prison, with five years suspended.

September 2015

Other act

UN Working Group finds his detention arbitrary

At its September 2015 session the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found the detention of nine Saudi human rights defenders, including Mohammad al-Bajadi, Mohammed Fahd Al-Qahtani, Raif Badawi and Waleed Abu al-Khair, arbitrary and called for their immediate release and reparation.

21 April 2016

Release

Released after completing his prison term

He was released after serving the five-year custodial part of his sentence, having been taken on 29 November 2015 to the Mohammed bin Nayef Counselling and Care Centre.

24 May 2018

Re-arrest

Re-arrested during crackdown on women's rights defenders

He was arrested during a crackdown on women's rights defenders and made to serve the five suspended years of his earlier sentence. He has since been held in Buraydah Prison in al-Qassim.

April 2023

Detention beyond the end of a sentence

Kept in detention after his sentence expired

His sentence expired in April 2023, but he was not released and remained held in Buraydah Prison without access to legal representation.

April 2025

Other act

UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders raises his case

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, highlighted his case, pointing to the practice of holding Saudi defenders after their sentences end.

27 October 2025

Conviction

Retried and sentenced to a further 25 years

The Specialised Criminal Court retried him, more than two years after his previous sentence had expired, and sentenced him to a further 25 years in prison. He was denied legal representation during the retrial, and the charges have not been made public.

15 December 2025

Other act

UN experts write to Saudi Arabia about his retrial and sentence

Four UN Special Rapporteurs sent a communication (AL SAU 2/2025) raising concern about the retrial, the 25-year sentence and the lack of access to a lawyer. They recalled that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had found his detention arbitrary in 2015.

19 June 2026

Detention conditions and health

Still detained after the 25-year sentence

SANAD reported that he remains in custody, with reports of prolonged solitary confinement, denial of family visits and restricted access to legal representation. ALQST lists him as held in Buraydah Prison, al-Qassim.

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The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Mohammed al-Bejadi remains in Buraydah Prison in al-Qassim, serving a further 25-year sentence imposed on 27 October 2025 after a retrial held more than two years after his previous term had expired. The most recent public report, from SANAD in June 2026, describes prolonged solitary confinement and denial of family visits.

Background and Work

Mohammed Saleh al-Bejadi, born in 1979 and living in Buraydah in al-Qassim, is a Saudi human rights defender. In 2009 he was among the founding members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), with Mohammed Fahd Al-Qahtani and others. ACPRA campaigned for a constitutional monarchy, for an end to political persecution and torture in prisons, and for people held without charge or trial; it was later banned. GCHR notes that his activism also included support for women's rights. ALQST reports that when the Ministry of Interior offered to free detained relatives if he stopped speaking out, he replied that all prisoners of conscience were his family, a phrase he repeated at a protest in 2011. In 2020 Amnesty Netherlands awarded its Geuzenpenning jointly to him, Mohammed Fahd Al-Qahtani, Abdullah al-Hamid and the lawyer Waleed Abu al-Khair.

The Arrest

He has been arrested three times. On 4 September 2007 he was detained and held in solitary confinement without charge for about four months, after speaking to international media about a sit-in for the release of political prisoners. On 21 March 2011 he was arrested in Buraydah, a day after joining a protest by detainees' families outside the Ministry of Interior in Riyadh. He was released on 21 April 2016 after serving five years. On 24 May 2018, during the crackdown on women's rights defenders, he was arrested again and made to serve the five suspended years of his earlier sentence.

Detention Conditions and Health

Across his detentions he has reported beatings, electrocution and months of solitary confinement, and has been denied contact with his family and his lawyers, according to ALQST and GCHR. In 2012, while on trial, he was reported to have been on hunger strike from 11 March and to have stopped taking water on 7 April; the Interior Ministry denied that he was on hunger strike. In late November 2015 he was taken to the Mohammed bin Nayef Counselling and Care Centre before his release. Since 2018 he has been held in Buraydah Prison. In June 2026 SANAD reported prolonged solitary confinement, denial of family visits and restricted access to legal representation.

Legal Proceedings

His first trial before the Specialised Criminal Court opened in August 2011. On 10 April 2012, in a secret session that his family and lawyers were not told about, the court sentenced him to four years in prison and a five-year travel ban for participating in establishing a human rights organisation, harming the image of the state through the media, calling on detainees' families to protest, contesting the independence of the judiciary and possessing banned books. His lawyers were never allowed into

the hearings. That ruling was overturned on appeal; a second trial began in August 2013 and, according to ALQST, ended in March 2015 with a sentence of 10 years, five of them suspended. MENA Rights Group gives different figures for this ruling.

The suspended part of the sentence ran out in April 2023, but he was not released. ALQST reports that he was brought for retrial in mid-2025, and SANAD reported that the first hearing was set for 27 October 2025. On that day the Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him to a further 25 years in prison. He had no lawyer during the retrial, and the charges have not been made public. No appeal has been reported.

International Response

Amnesty International called him a prisoner of conscience in 2012. At its September 2015 session the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found his detention arbitrary, in an opinion that also covered Mohammed Fahd Al-Qahtani, Raif Badawi and Waleed Abu al-Khair. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, raised his case in April 2025, and on 7 August 2025 twelve organisations, including ALQST, Human Rights Watch, GCHR, FIDH, OMCT and MENA Rights Group, called for his release. On 15 December 2025 four UN Special Rapporteurs wrote to the Saudi government about the retrial and the lack of a lawyer (AL SAU 2/2025).

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/mohammed-al-bejadi/

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