



Abdulrahman al-Sadhan

Humanitarian aid worker

Date of birth:

28 May 1983

Profession:

Humanitarian aid worker at the Saudi Red Crescent



Status:

Detained; forcibly disappeared



Date of arrest:

12 March 2018



Date of sentencing:

5 April 2021



Sentence:

20 years in prison and a 20-year travel ban



Further case background



Case notes:

Following his arrest at his workplace by security forces, al-Sadhan was held incommunicado for months at a secret location without any contact with lawyers or relatives, despite his family making continuous requests. On 12 February 2020, nearly two years after his arrest and disappearance, he was able to make his first phone call. On 22 February 2021, he was allowed to make a second call, in which he told his family that the prison authorities had said there were no charges against him and he would soon be released. He had clearly been misinformed, however, as in his third call, on 2 March, he told them his trial was due to begin the following day. While in detention al-Sadhan has been subjected to severe torture, and he has become pre-diabetic as a result of the harsh conditions he has had to endure. He has been denied any further contact with his family since his last court appearance in October 2021.



Summary of judicial proceedings:

The charges brought against him relate to posts on two satirical Twitter accounts that al-Sadhan was accused of running, as well as a forced confession. According to the court, the tweets violated several articles of the Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Cybercrime Laws. The tweets in question were posted before the laws under which he was charged came into force. Al-Sadhan's court-appointed lawyer had only 40 minutes to meet with him before the first hearing of his trial, and one hour to study the evidence against him. Further hearings followed, but on multiple occasions neither al-Sadhan's lawyer nor his father were informed of the dates and they were therefore unable to attend. On 5 April 2021, the Specialised Criminal Court (SCC) sentenced al-Sadhan to 20 years in prison to be followed by a 20-year travel ban, which was upheld by the Court of Appeal on 5 October 2021.



Take action:

The Saudi authorities are susceptible to international pressure, which when applied sufficiently and in coordinated fashion can lead to human rights victories on the ground, such as the release of prisoners of conscience. Conversely, when outside pressure is relaxed, the Saudi leadership reverts to its repressive ways with a sense of impunity.

There has been significant support for Abdulrahman so far. However, further support is needed. Here are some more ways that you can help push for his release:



1- Tweet

Abdulrahman was sentenced for allegedly running two satirical Twitter accounts. Twitter bears its own responsibility for this, as it is widely believed that he was identified as the author of the accounts by former Twitter employees charged with spying for Saudi Arabia. You can [tweet](#) for his release, using the hashtag #FreeSadhan.



Sample tweets here



2- Sign the petition

A [petition](#) is live via Global Citizen, calling for Abdulrahman's release.



Sign it here



Write to elected officials

Wherever you are based, whether in the United States (where Abdulrahman studied and some of his family live), or elsewhere, you can [write](#) to your elected representative to call on your government to take action to help secure his release.



Sample letter