

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Name
2018		91	Saudi Arabia	Hatoon Al-Fassi

Announcement

On 19 July 2018, Scholars at Risk reported that **Hatoon Al-Fassi**, an associate professor of women's history in Saudi Arabia, has been detained between 21 and 24 June 2018, apparently because of her women's rights activism, including her leadership in the movement to lift the ban on women driving.

Please find below:

1. A description of the case by Scholars at Risk.
2. A template letter that you can send to the Saudi authorities.

We hope that you can send the recommended appeal immediately. Please remember to write in your professional capacity. Many thanks.

SCHOLARS AT RISK — CASE DESCRIPTION

Source: http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/50943/p/dia/action4/common/public/?action_KEY=25273

Dr. Hatoon Al-Fassi Detained Over Women's Rights Activism

July 19, 2018 - Scholars at Risk (SAR) is gravely concerned for the well-being of Dr. Hatoon Al-Fassi, an associate professor of women's history and renowned women's rights activist, who is currently detained by Saudi authorities.

SAR understands that authorities detained Dr. Al-Fassi between June 21 and 24, 2018, in apparent relation for her women's rights activism, including her leadership in the movement to lift the ban on women driving. At the time she was taken into custody, Dr. Al-Fassi was reportedly under a travel ban. As of this alert, the circumstances surrounding her arrest remain unclear. Public information regarding Dr. Al-Fassi's

current status, including her location, a possible court date, whether she has counsel, or the specific charges against her, if any, is unavailable.

Dr. Al-Fassi's detention comes against the backdrop of a series of state efforts, starting in May 2018, to detain women's rights defenders and other activists. Authorities have accused the activists of having suspicious contacts with, and providing support to, "foreign entities;" however, they have not publicly disclosed the evidentiary bases for these accusations. Some of those detained have been released temporarily, while those still in custody have reportedly been denied access to family and legal counsel. These actions appear to uniformly target activists like Dr. Al-Fassi, who have worked for political reform, including lifting the driving ban.

SAR asks for emails, letters, and faxes urging Saudi authorities to release Dr. Al-Fassi and otherwise to ensure that any case against her proceeds in a manner consistent with Saudi Arabia's obligations under international law, including those relating to due process and fair trial.

SCHOLARS AT RISK — TEMPLATE LETTER

To: His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

**King of Saudi Arabia and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

**Office of His Majesty the King

**Royal Court

**Riyadh

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

[Date]

Re: Dr. Hatoon Al-Fassi

Your Majesty,

I write to express grave concern for the well-being of Dr. Hatoon Al-Fassi, an associate professor of women's history at King Saud University, a contributor to Saudi Arabia's al-Riyadh newspaper, and a renowned women's rights activist, who is currently detained. I respectfully urge you to call on the

appropriate authorities to immediately release Dr. Al-Fassi.

I understand from Scholars at Risk (SAR) that authorities detained Dr. Al-Fassi between June 21 and 24, 2018, in apparent relation for her women's rights activism, including her leadership in the movement to lift the ban on women driving. At the time she was taken into custody, Dr. Al-Fassi was reportedly under a travel ban. As of this letter, the circumstances surrounding her arrest remain unclear. Public information regarding Dr. Al-Fassi's current status, including her location, a possible court date, whether she has counsel, or the specific charges against her, if any, is unavailable.

I further understand that Dr. Al-Fassi's detention comes against the backdrop of a series of state efforts, starting in May 2018, to detain women's rights defenders and other activists. Authorities have accused the activists of having suspicious contacts with, and providing support to, "foreign entities;" however, they have not publicly disclosed the evidentiary bases for these accusations. Some of those detained have been released temporarily, while those still in custody have reportedly been denied access to family and legal counsel. These actions appear to uniformly target activists like Dr. Al-Fassi, who have worked for political reform, including lifting the driving ban.

I welcome any additional information that may explain these events or clarify my understanding. Absent this, the facts as described suggest that Dr. Al-Fassi is being detained as a result of the nonviolent exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association—conduct that is expressly protected under international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Saudi Arabia is a party.

I therefore respectfully urge you to direct the appropriate authorities to release Dr. Al-Fassi and otherwise to ensure that any case against her proceeds in a manner consistent with Saudi Arabia's obligations under international law, including those relating to due process and fair trial.

I appreciate your attention to her important matter and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

CC:

His Royal Highness Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud

**Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense

**Ministry of Defense

**Riyadh, 11165

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Fax: +966 11-402-6457

His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz Bin Saud Bin Naif Bin Abdulaziz

**Minister of Interior

**Ministry of Interior

**Riyadh, 11431

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The Honorable Dr. Waleed bin Mohammad Al Samaani

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