

10 January 2017

Saudi Arabia – Human rights defenders detained by Saudi authorities

On 5 January 2017, human rights defender Mr. **Ahmed Mshikhs** was summoned and later detained by Saudi authorities without charge in Al-Qatif police prison – he is currently being held in Al-Dammam general prison. On 8 January 2017, Mr. **Essam Koshak** was summoned and detained the following day by the Mecca Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution without charge. Both human rights defenders are currently in detention.

[Ahmed Mshikhs](#) is a prominent human rights defender and co-founder of Al-Adalah Centre for Human Rights in Saudi Arabia working to promote and protect civil and political rights in the country. [Essam Koshak](#) is also a prominent human rights defender working on civil and political rights in Saudi Arabia. He is active on twitter and has been particularly vocal on issues of corruption and freedom of expression in Saudi Arabia.

Essam Koshak was first summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department in Mecca on 8 January 2017 and detained on the same day detained until late evening hours in Al-Mansour police station after which he was released. The human rights defender was ordered to appear before the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution in Mecca on the following day. He complied but was then detained by the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution and has been held without charge since. On 10 January 2017, the Saudi authorities extended the detention of Essam Koshak by four additional days and have prohibited him from seeking legal counsel.

Earlier in the week on 5 January 2017, human rights defender Ahmed Mshikhs was summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department in Al-Qatif. He was then arrested and detained in Al-Qatif police prison. On 8 January 2017 he was transferred to the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution in Al-Dammam and he is currently being held in Al-Dammam general prison without charge.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the detention of human rights defenders Ahmed Mshikhs and Essam Koshak, as it believes it to be associated with his legitimate and peaceful human rights activities in Saudi Arabia. Front Line Defenders is particularly concerned that the Essam Koshak has not yet been allowed to seek legal counsel.

Front Line Defenders urges Saudi authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release human rights defenders Ahmed Mshikhs and Essam Koshak and cease any further judicial harassment against them;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Ahmed Mshikhs and Essam Koshak, 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;
3. Ensure that Ahmed Mshikhs and Essam Koshak have access to legal counsel immediately in case

their detention continues;

4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.