

14 April 2017

Saudi Arabia – Detention of women’s rights defender Alaa Al-Anazi

On 11 April, human rights defender, **Alaa Al-Anazi**, was arrested by Saudi authorities at King Khalid International Airport (Riyadh airport) where she was showing solidarity with Dina Ali Lasloom, a Saudi woman travelling to Australia to escape her abusive family. Dina Ali Lasloom was forced to return to Saudi Arabia during a layover at Manila airport in the Philippines, upon instructions from the Saudi embassy in Manila.

[Alaa Al-Anazi](#) is a 24-year-old Saudi human rights defender and medical student advocating for women’s rights in Saudi Arabia. She was involved in several campaigns to promote women’s rights, including a media campaign to raise awareness of the impunity of men in Saudi Arabia following incidents of domestic violence. The campaign was launched in response to the harrowing death of a recently married Saudi woman, identified as Khadija, who was regularly subjected to severe domestic abuse by her husband, sustained serious injuries and subsequently died of a heart attack on 21 March 2017.

Having discovered that Dina Ali Lasloom was being forced to return to Saudi Arabia, despite threats against her life, Alaa Al-Anazi Tweeted that she would meet her at Riyadh airport on 11 April 2017 as an act of solidarity. While Alaa Al-Anazi was waiting for Dina Ali Lasloom in the arrivals hall, security personnel arrested her for allegedly taking photographs of security vehicles that had been parked outside of Riyadh airport and for photographing security personnel at the airport. On 14 April 2017, the Riyadh airport spokesperson stated that Alaa Al-Anazi was sending photographs of security personnel to a Whatsapp group showing solidarity and support for Dina Ali Lasloom by raising awareness about her case. Several journalists who were at the airport at the time Alaa Al-Anazi was arrested have reported that the human rights defender was apprehended after she asked Saudi security authorities about the whereabouts of Dina Ali Lasloom.

Alaa Al-Anazi is now being detained, pending investigation, at a youth detention facility for females in Riyadh. The family of Alaa Al-Anazi was not contacted by authorities regarding the location of their daughter. Two days after her detention, they discovered through personal inquiries where their daughter was being held. The human rights defender’s family are concerned that her arrest will impact her studies as her term at university continues. It is also feared that Dina Ali Lasloom was kidnapped upon arrival at Riyadh airport, either by Saudi authorities or by members of her family.

Front Line Defenders condemns the detention of human rights defender, Alaa Al-Anazi, as it believes it to be related to her legitimate and peaceful human rights activities in Saudi Arabia.

Front Line Defenders urges Saudi authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release human rights defender, **Alaa Al-Anazi**, and cease any further judicial harassment against her;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Alaa Al-Anazi, 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 Alaa Al-Anazi has access to legal counsel immediately in case her 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.