

## Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc.

The University of Arizona · 1232 North Cherry Avenue · Tucson, Arizona 85721

August 26, 1994

His Royal Majesty King Fahd ibn abdel Aziz al-Saud  
Custodian of the Council of Ministers  
The Council of Ministers  
Saudi Arabia

Your Royal Majesty:

We are writing to express our concern about the detention of a number of academics in connection with the suppression of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights. We have already sent you a letter dated 5 May 1994 decrying the punishment of Saudi academics for peaceful human rights advocacy and calling for effective measures to eliminate such violations of human rights and academic freedom. We are disturbed to learn that academic supporters of human rights remain in detention and that punishment has been extended to their relatives.

The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2300 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The association publishes the respected *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and is committed to ensuring respect for the principles of academic freedom and human rights throughout the region.

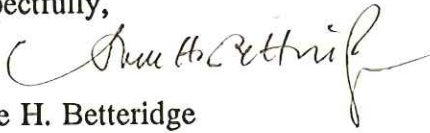
We understand that academics with ties to the committee have been detained, including Dr. Hussain Mashur al-Hazimi, an assistant professor in the Physics Department of King Saud University in Riyadh. He was arrested in May of 1994 and his home was searched. We have learned that Dr. Fouad Dehlawi, Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering at Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, was arrested in April of 1994 and that his home and office were searched. As far as we can determine, these searches and detentions have been carried out without any criminal charges being brought. As the detainees are being held incommunicado and denied access to counsel, there is reason to fear that they may be being mistreated. We know that the American wife of Dr. Dehlawi is acutely worried about her husband's well-being. Such arrests and prolonged detentions without there being any indication of criminal activity violate international norms in the area of criminal justice, as does the practice of holding the detainees incommunicado and denying them access to counsel.

In addition, we understand that relatives of Professor Muhammad al-Mas'ari, the spokesman for the committee, have been placed in detention. They include Lu'ay bin Abdullah al-Mas'ari, his brother, who is a student at the University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran and who disappeared in May of 1994. In addition, his son Ammar Muhammad al-Mas'ari, was arrested in April of 1994 and is believed to be imprisoned in Ha'il Prison. It appears that

these last two individuals have been detained solely by reason of their family connection to Professor al-Mas'ari and as a means of pressuring him to cease human rights advocacy in London. Such reprisals against family members are in flagrant conflict with the norms of international law.

We respectfully urge that measures of this sort, punishing academics for demanding respect for human rights, cease forthwith. We also urge that all persons being detained solely by reason of their human rights advocacy or their blood ties to persons engaged in such advocacy be immediately released. We also call for the implementation of a policy of respect for academic freedom that recognizes the right of academics to work in association with others with the aim of promoting human rights.

Respectfully,



Anne H. Betteridge  
Executive Director

AHB/sp

cc: Crown Prince Abdallah ibn Abdel Aziz al-Saud  
Prince Nayef ibn Abdel Aziz al-Saud, The Minister of the Interior  
Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Prince Bandar ibn Sultan, Ambassador to the United States of America  
David Welch, Charge d'Affairs, Embassy of the United States of America  
Dr. Abdel Aziz al-Khauwaiter, Minister of Higher Education  
Dr. Ahmed al-Dhubaib, President, King Saud University  
John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights