

The First of June, 2015

In my capacity as the current head of the human rights organization ALQST, as a human rights activist, and as a man born and raised in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I have wrestled with my country's problems. As I specialized in the field of human rights, I began to increasingly compare the exercise and obligations of power, and to become aware of what that balance should be. As such, I grew confident that one of the greatest problems facing Saudi society is an absolute monarchy which imposes a singular vision on life's every detail. This monarchical rule, in a far cry from justice, deals harshly with anyone who violates its vision and completely prohibits freedom of expression.

Where civil society organizations are absent, and where the mechanisms for criticizing and evaluating the actions of the government are lacking, independent activists shoulder a heavy burden. While some align themselves with one party, rationalizing and even demanding the exclusion and suppression of those with whom they disagree, a number of others are more conscious of and dedicated to their homeland, to the human, and to his rights. They demand the rights of all without exception, enduring severe hardship as a result.

Waleed Sami Abu al-Khair, in addition to the Jeddah Reformers and the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), are the best examples of those demanding equal rights for all. Throughout the time that I have known Abu al-Khair, and on the many occasions that we have sat and spoken together, he has clearly articulated his absolute support for human rights, regardless of gender, skin color, appearance, or ideological background. A genuine call for the safety and security of society, universal freedom of expression, the insuring of justice for all: these are among the most important and noble of his demands. Unless Saudi authorities respond to these calls, the country's internal situation will not improve, negatively impacting the entire of the region. The government should treat Abu al-Khair and his companions as sincerely dedicated rescuers. Instead, it sentences them to long prison terms before a Specialized Criminal Court meant for terrorism cases, using the clarity and nobility of their demands to waste years of their lives and distort their reputations.

Best Regards,



Yahya Assiri
Head of ALQST