

# ISSUE #43- MAY 2024

## Highlights on the Crackdown on the Human Rights in the Gulf

**SAUDI ARABIA**

**BAHRAIN**

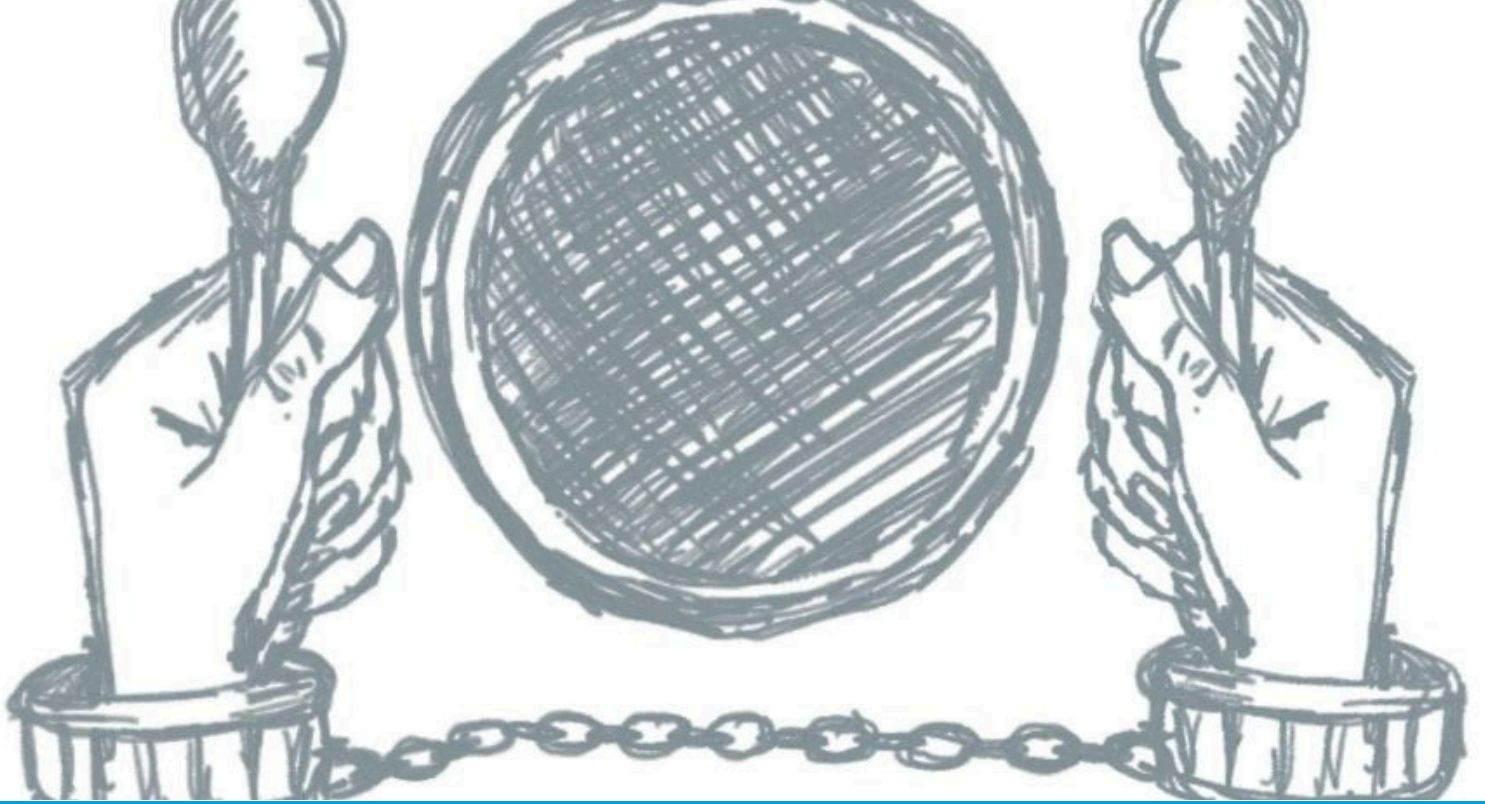
**YEMEN**

**All attempts to halt the  
activism of prisoners' families  
failed**



**EU Lawyers Calls on  
FIFA to Consider Saudi  
Arabia Human Rights  
Record**

**Civilian Casualties in  
US Strikes on Yemen**



## **Political Prisoner Endure Severe Violations**

As the political prisoners refused to end their peaceful protest, Jaw prison's administration deprived them of their basic needs; a significant decrease in the amount of food provided, leading them to refuse their meals. Additionally, they revealed that they had been unable to purchase goods from the prison canteen for several months. This includes hygienic goods such as shampoo, toothpaste, deodorants, sterilizers, cleaning detergents...

In response, nearly 500 political prisoners refused their meals for 4 days as a form of protest against the sudden reduction of their meals. In a show of solidarity, some family members of the prisoners also went on hunger strikes. On the fourth day, the prisoners were finally given sufficient food quantities, prompting them to resume eating. However, the ban on purchasing items from the prison canteen remained in place.



## All attempts to halt the activism of prisoners' families failed

In early May, the families of political prisoners made the decision to hold an open sit-in outside Jaw Prison, urging for the release of all political prisoners who were being held captive. During the sit-in, the families exhibited photographs of their imprisoned sons and held up banners with slogans advocating for their freedom. As their gathering grew in size, security forces launched an attack on them, ultimately bringing an end to the sit-in. At least five of the protesters, including Ali Muhanna, Sayed Hussein Sayed Majid, and Qasim Hani Ahmed, were apprehended and detained. However, all five individuals were subsequently released within a few days.

Undeterred, the families continued to actively participate in various sit-ins and marches, persistently calling for the freedom of their beloved sons. On 12 May, activist Ali Muhanna was arrested for the second time. He was summoned for questioning after attempting to organize a protest in front of the Interior Ministry alongside other families of political prisoners in an effort to hand over a letter to the ministry. Muhanna spent the night in jail and revealed that the public prosecutor's office had charged him with participating in an unlawful gathering.

Authorities made continuous efforts to suppress the families' activism, as they forcefully entered the Abu Saiba region on 17 May, where a protest was scheduled to take place. The extensive presence of police vehicles and officers in the vicinity of the planned protest location deterred the protesters from reaching their destination, resulting in the cancellation of the protest.

Conversely, in May, the individuals who had been previously released from prison through a royal pardon in April found themselves targeted once again. For instance, on 4 May, Mohammad Jalil Al-Kazzaz was called in for questioning by the Criminal Investigation department after he posted a picture of the late Hussein Al-Ramram on social media, accompanied by a caption advocating for the release of all prisoners. Al-Ramram, a political detainee, passed away in Jaw Prison in March due to medical neglect.

Salman Abbas was also re-arrested on 8 May while visiting his brother in Jaw Prison. The arrest stemmed from a complaint lodged by a prison guard against Salman during his previous detention period.

Furthermore, a number of former inmates were summoned for interrogation following a peaceful protest outside the Ministry of Housing. They had gathered at the ministry to demand housing rights, as their housing applications had been revoked during their lengthy incarceration. They are now seeking compensation and the restoration of their rights.



## **EU Lawyers Calls on FIFA to Consider Saudi Arabia Human Rights Record**

A trio of European lawyers has urged FIFA to adhere to its own policy and thoroughly examine Saudi Arabia's human rights track record before

selecting the kingdom as the host for the 2034 Men's World Cup. In a joint letter by Mark Pieth, Stefan Wehrenberg, and Rodney Dixon, they have requested FIFA to utilize its influence over Saudi Arabia to ensure compliance with international human rights standards, which are mandatory for countries hosting the tournament.

This is not the sole appeal to monitor the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia. Various human rights organizations have also called upon Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to address human rights concerns during his visit to the kingdom, particularly in discussions with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. The organizations believe that the Japanese government should not only enhance its engagement with Saudi Arabia across various sectors such as energy, trade, investment, and tourism, but also intensify its efforts to advocate for improvements in the country's human rights conditions.



## **Manahel Al-Qtaibi Was Secretly Sentenced to 11 Years in Prison**

ALQst and Amnesty International, two human rights organizations, have disclosed that Saudi authorities covertly imposed an 11-year prison

sentence on Manahel Al-Otaibi, an activist advocating for women's rights. The court's ruling was only made known to the public through Saudi Arabia's official response to a request from the United Nations human rights office regarding Otaibi's situation, as stated by the organizations.

Manahel was arrested in November 2022 after publishing social media posts calling for some women's rights. "Since the moment she was arrested, Saudi Arabia's authorities have subjected her to a relentless catalogue of abuses, from unlawful detention for supporting women's rights to enforced disappearance for over five months while she was being secretly interrogated, tried and sentenced and subjected to repeated beatings by others in the prison," the two organizations added.

On the other hand, Amnesty shed light on the case of the Yemeni-Dutch citizen, Fahd Ramadhan, who is imprisoned in Saudi Arabia. On 20 November 2023, two days after arriving in Saudi Arabia, Ramadhan was summoned for investigation. Upon his arrival, Fahd was arbitrarily detained without giving him a reason or allowing him to contact a lawyer.

When his sister visited him on 1 January 2024, he mentioned that his interrogation had concluded, yet he remained uninformed about any charges against him and lacked legal representation. During a visit by Dutch embassy officials on 21 March, Ramadhan disclosed that his online expression of sympathy towards a critic of the Saudi royal family in the past may have led to his arrest.



# Civilian Casualties in US Strikes on Yemen

On the early morning of 31 May 2024, a series of airstrikes conducted by the US military struck various civilian-populated areas in Sanaa, Hodeidah, and Taiz. Tragically, this act of aggression resulted in the loss of life for at least 16 individuals, with 35 others sustaining injuries, the majority of whom were innocent civilians.

Among the locations targeted was the Hodeidah Radio building. The General Corporation for Radio has confirmed that the building was completely decimated following four consecutive bombings. The corporation has strongly condemned the deliberate attack on Radio Hodeidah, emphasizing that it constitutes a clear violation of international laws and conventions that protect civilian media establishments. It is imperative that this heinous act be denounced and addressed accordingly.