

**Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression**

REFERENCE:  
UA SAU 6/2019

1 April 2019

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 33/30, 36/6 and 34/18.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the alleged arrest and enforced disappearance of Yemeni journalist, **Marwan Ali Naji Al Muraisy**, in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al Muraisy is a Yemeni digital media, creative content and e-marketing journalist with over 100 000 followers on Twitter. He is a resident of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

According to the information received:

In June 2016, Mr. Al Muraisy appeared in a television interview with cleric Salman Al Odah, who was later arrested in September 2017 for a post on Twitter in which he called for mediation between the Qatari and Saudi authorities. The Public Prosecution has requested that Mr. Al Odah be sentenced to death. During the interview, Mr. Al Muraisy discussed new online tools for conveying information to Arab audiences.

On 1 June 2018, Mr. Al Muraisy returned to his home in Riyadh after visiting a hospital where his son was receiving treatment. Upon arrival at his home, he was arrested by officers in plain clothes from the National Security Service. No arrest warrant was presented. He was taken to an undisclosed location and his fate and whereabouts remain unknown to date. Mr. Al Muraisy's family remain un-notified about his condition and state of detention.

We express grave concern at the alleged arrest and enforced disappearance of Mr. Al Muraisy since June 2018. We are particularly concerned that his arrest and disappearance may be directly connected to his work as a journalist. The deprivation of liberty and disappearance of Mr. Al Muraisy would be inconsistent with the right of every individual to life, liberty and security of the person, the right to recognition as a person before the law and the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, as set forth in articles 3, 6 and 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). If found to be connected to his dissenting voice and his work as a journalist, the arrest and

disappearance of Mr. Al Muraisy would moreover be inconsistent with the right to freedom of opinion and expression as set forth in article 19 of the UDHR. We reiterate our concerns raised at the reported crackdown on dissent by Saudi authorities.

We further note that the above-mentioned allegations appear to violate articles 2, 3, 7, 10 and 13 of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Articles 2 and 10 specifically set out the necessary protection by the State; in particular, that no State shall practice, permit or tolerate enforced disappearances (article 2), that any person deprived of liberty shall be held in an officially recognised place of detention (article 10.1) and that an official up-to-date register of all persons deprived of their liberty shall be maintained in every place of detention (article 10.3).

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned person(s) in compliance with international instruments.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide information about the legal basis for the arrest of Mr. Al Muraisy.
3. Please provide information about the place of detention of Mr. Al Muraisy, as well as information about his physical and mental condition.
4. Please provide information about whether any charges have been brought against Mr. Al Muraisy as well as about the factual basis underlying the charges.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations.

We intend to publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government to clarify the issue/s in question.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

We would like to inform your Excellency's Government that after having transmitted an urgent appeal to the Government, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention may transmit the case through its regular procedure in order to render an opinion on whether the deprivation of liberty was arbitrary or not. Such appeals in no way prejudice any opinion the Working Group may render. The Government is required to respond separately for the urgent appeal procedure and the regular procedure.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Elina Steinerte  
Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Bernard Duhaime  
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

David Kaye  
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion  
and expression