

# Saudi Arabia: Arrest of two activists who defend the women's right to drive a car

Monday 8 December 2014, by [GCHR](#) (Date first published: 2 December 2014).

Two activists Maysaa Al-Amodi and Lujain Al-Hathlol have been arrested on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014. They have both been working strongly in defense of women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia and have participated actively in the campaigns, "I have the right to lead" and "my right to my dignity."

Maysaa Al-Amodi was arrested, without being given a reason, on arrival at the Saudi Arabia-UAE border on her way to deliver some personal materials to the scholarship student, Lujain Al-Hathlol, who was also arrested after arriving by road from UAE. Lujain Al-Hathlol was arrested at the Saudi Passports Control Office where they confiscated her passport and prevent her from entering the country.

Reliable reports confirm that Maysaa Al-Amodi is being held at the central prison in Al-Ahsa while Lujain Al-Hathlol is kept at the Al-Ahsa Girls House. Al-Hathlol holds a Gulf general driving license, which allows her to drive in Saudi Arabia, although such licences for women are not recognised by the authorities.

The Monitor for Human Rights in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) believes that the targeting of activist Maysaa Al-Amodi and Lujain Al-Hathlol forms part of an ongoing systematic policy of harassment by the Saudi authorities against activists who demand the women's right to drive a car in Saudi Arabia. Many activists have already been detained and have had their cars seized.

The Monitor for Human Rights and the GCHR urge the authorities in Saudi Arabia to:

1. Stop targeting campaigners for women's right to drive and allow women to drive freely without any harassment;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders and journalists in Saudi Arabia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free from all restrictions including security and judicial harassment.

We respectfully reminds the authorities in Saudi Arabia that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (c) "Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (c) To study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters" and to Article 12.2, which provides that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence,

threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.”

### **Gulf Center for Human Rights**

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