



A Letter to Judges I Don't Know:
Release My Mother Fatima Al-Nasif

I want to send a humane appeal to the judiciary in Riyadh. My name is Shahed and I am 15 years old. I haven't heard the voice of my mother, Fatima Al-Nasif, for over 10 days. I heard from her prison inmates that she was taken to trial in Riyadh last week. We were waiting for her return to the General Investigations Directorate prison in Dammam. Yesterday (Monday) was our weekly phone call date. We waited for a call from her to tell us any information about her trial, but we didn't receive any heartwarming news.

Judges,

We had no money to assign her a lawyer. We spent all the money we had on the trials of my uncles, Mostafa and Majed. Majed (1980) was arrested in 2011 and sentenced to 17 years in prison, while Mostafa (1983) was arrested in 2009 and still awaits his trial. We lost a large amount of our gold and money savings when a group of security men led by an officer wearing a red Shemagh stormed our house and took everything in our house's safe after they terrorized us, the day following my mother's arrest. We also paid a lot to lawyers who could only tell us the dates of trials. We paid more to mediators in the government who deceived us into thinking that they can secure their release. We have no more money, hope or trust to pay a lawyer or a mediator.



Mostafa (1983) was arrested in 2009 and still awaits his trial.

Judges,

I was thirteen years old when my mother was arrested. I found myself responsible for my sister Batoul and had to lie to her to convince her that my mother is not in jail. We have been in Canada for months now and I tried to convince Batoul that we are far from my mother so we can't visit her. Batoul and I are in a very tricky situation. I suddenly found myself as a mother to Batoul who also found herself without a mother. We also suddenly found ourselves living in a different country than where our mother is in prison.

I realized that this voice which is filled with love and pain for us can do nothing that's worth being locked up in prison.

Judges,

Please look through the eyes of your hearts to one of the tragic scenes my sister Batoul and I face while bidding farewell to our mother after a one hour visit the prison administration allows us per month. I am no longer the child who cannot leave her mother's lap, I became the mother, father and grandmother, who has to hide all this pain while pulling her little sister from her mother's arms. Please, judges, ask the prison staff about our condition during the visits. Ask their eyes which are full of sympathy for us; ask their broken hearts for Fatima and her daughters. Abandon, for one time only, the papers in your hands, and look at us.

Judges,

Believe me, I blamed my mother more than you. I spoke to her in public and in private. What is the crime she committed to make us end up with this fate? I told her in my imaginary dialogues, which are many, with her that you had no right to put us in this critical situation. I blamed her a lot and got angry with her. I almost cut off my relation with her, yet I forget everything with the first word she said to me over the phone. I realized that this voice which is filled with love and pain for us can do nothing that's worth being locked up in prison.

Judges,

My mother, Fatima Al-Nassif, had completed her practical course in nursing during the summer she was arrested in 2017. Do you know how she was arrested? Batoul and I were with her in the car, and suddenly we were stopped by a civilian car, and masked people came out of it. We hid by our mother out of fear, but they violently dragged her and insulted us. They smashed her face on the car. I still remember the bruise that appeared on my mother's face. My sister and I wet our pants as a result of the horror we witnessed. We left the car and didn't know who we should resort to at that time. We suddenly lost our mother. We no longer had a mother. Our grandmother died a year before this incident in grief over her two detained sons. Perhaps it was in god's mercy that she died before witnessing her daughter's arrest.

Judges,

I tell my Canadian friends here that Islam is a religion of mercy and forgiveness, but I stand unable to convince them because of my story. They ask me: How can Islam be a religion of mercy and forgiveness when the judge who is trying your mother cannot find a way out by this sharia, in the name of which he passes sentences, to release your mother? Is your religion this cruel to condemn your sister with deprivation that is deadly to the spirit and childhood? How can this mercy turn a blind eye to this child on the grounds that her mother is accused of providing medical assistance to political protesters? I ask your honor, judges, to help us provide a model of mercy. I want to tell them that the mercy of Islam has released Batoul's mother and enabled her to recover her childhood.



I draw my mother so I won't forget her
Batoul (6 years old)

Judges,

I haven't felt the spirit of Mother's Day since two years ago. In the first year, I tried to give my mother a gold chain to express the hope that God would set her free from the prison's chains, but the prison's administration told me it was forbidden. I started to run away not only from Mother's Day, but from all the scenes of motherhood, because it brings me back to the plight of my mother, whom I lost along with my daily conversations with her, the moments I tell her about my school day, and the nickname that made me proud: her mother's pampered daughter.

Judges,

If you can't find among your Sharia texts a way out that would return our mother to us, then let your hearts be filled with God's mercy to behold the scene of our painful childhood.

**I lost the nickname that made me proud:
her mother's pampered daughter.**

*Shahed, Daughter of Fatima Al-Nasif
July 2019*

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