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## Endangered Scholars Worldwide

John Clegg

Social Research: An International Quarterly, Volume 75, Number 1, Spring 2008, pp. v-ix (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2008.0048>



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# Endangered Scholars Worldwide

*Once again we urge our readers to act on behalf of these endangered scholars around the world. It is all that we can do, but we know that doing so can make a difference. If you are aware of endangered or imprisoned scholars whose cases are not included in our listing, please e-mail us at [socres@newschool.edu](mailto:socres@newschool.edu).*

—Arien Mack

## **NEW CASES**

**DR. 'ABDULLAH AL-HAMID**, a writer and former professor of contemporary literature at Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud University, Riyadh, was sentenced to four months in prison on November 7, 2007, in Buraida, Saudia Arabia, for encouraging a public demonstration by the wives of detainees in the intelligence prisons. The wives claimed their husbands had not been charged or tried, despite being imprisoned for over two years. A number of the women were arrested, but released shortly afterward. Dr 'Abdullah, along with his brother 'Issa, was charged with "incitement to protest" and is due to start serving his sentence on March 8, 2008. He previously spent 17 months in prison after he and two other reformers were arrested in March 2004 for writing a petition to then-Crown Prince Abdullah, calling on the government to enact reforms with constitutionally guaranteed human rights. Amnesty International reports that he and his brother are at risk of torture if incarcerated.

Information current, to the best of our knowledge, as of March 8, 2008.

Appeals to:

Ambassador Adel A. Al-Jubeir  
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
601 New Hampshire Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20037  
Fax: 202 944 3113  
Email: info@saudiembassy.net

King Abdullah  
bin 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud  
Royal Palace  
Riyadh  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Salutation: Your Majesty

**DR. USSAMA AL-MULLA**, a professor of dentistry at Baghdad University, was arrested by Iraqi security personnel on February 17, 2008, along with two other professors and four members of university staff, in a raid of the dentistry faculty in which staff were threatened at gunpoint and students beaten. The reasons for the arrests have not been reported, but it is said to be connected with the death of the previous dean. There have been reports that US soldiers raided the faculty the week before. The others arrestees were subsequently released, but Ussama is still being held in an unknown location without charge or trial. Amnesty International has reported that he is at risk of torture.

Appeals to:

Jalal Talabani  
President  
Salutation: Your Excellency  
E-mail:  
questions@iraqipresidency.net

Safi al-Din al-Safi  
Minister of Justice  
E-mail: minister@iraqi-justice.org  
deputy@iraqi-justice.org  
Salutation: Your Excellency

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki  
Prime Minister  
E-mail: iraqigov@yahoo.com  
Salutation: Your Excellency

Hoshiyar Zebari  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
E-mail: press@iraqmofa.net  
Salutation: Your Excellency

**AMIN GHAZAEI**, a prominent Iranian writer and leader of the group Students for Freedom and Equality, was arrested on January 14, 2008, in a meeting in Tehran along with 14 other students. He is reported to be held without charge or trial in solitary confinement in Evin Prison, and to have been tortured. Amin is known for the journal he edits, *ArtCult*, and his many online articles, two collected volumes of

which have already been published. He has translated several books into Farsi, among them works by Judith Butler, Jean Baudrillard, and Donna Haraway. The detention of Amin and his fellow students follows a wave of repression in Iranian universities in December 2007, when many students were arrested after campuses erupted in protest. Quite apart from the accusations of torture, there is concern for Amin's health, as he reportedly suffers from a peptic ulcer, heart problems, and asthma.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed'  
Ali Khamenei  
Leader of the Islamic Republic  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Islamic Republic Street-Shahid  
Keshvar Doust Street  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
E-mail: info@leader.ir  
Salutation: Your Excellency

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi  
Shahroudi  
Head of the Judiciary  
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh/  
Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., South of  
Serah-e Jomhourii  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
E-mail: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir  
(In the subject line write:  
FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)  
Salutation: Your Excellency

Gholam Hosseini Ejeie  
Minister of Intelligence  
Ministry of Intelligence  
Second Negarestan Street-  
Pasdaran Avenue  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Salutation: Your Excellency

**DR. ATILLA YAYLA**, a professor of politics at Gazi University in Turkey, was sentenced to a 15-month jail term on January 28, 2008, for insulting Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, in a speech in November 2006 in which he reportedly described the first phase of the leader's rule as "regressive in some respects." The sentence was suspended, with the court saying that it would monitor Professor Yayla for the next two years and apply it should he commit the same offense again. Commenting to the media, Professor Yayla said, "that means that I have a thought policeman from now on." Not only is this threat hanging over Professor Yayla an infringement of his academic freedom, his conviction is a blow

to freedom of expression in Turkey, acting as a precedent for the effective gagging of critical discourse in regard to the country's history.

Appeals to:

Mr. Mehmet Ali Sahin  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Adalet, Bakanligi  
06659 Ankara  
Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 419 3370

## UPDATES

We are happy to announce that since the publication of our last issue, all six of the PROFESSORS FROM DHAKA AND RAJASHANI UNIVERSITIES IN BANGLADESH have received presidential pardons (although they have yet to be exonerated by the courts). Also, the French-Canadian filmmaker MEHRNOUSHE SOLOUKI was allowed to leave Iran after her ordeal at the hands of authorities there, and is reportedly working on a new film telling her story of arrest and incarceration at Evin prison. A less fortuitous release is the release on parole of the Iranian human rights activist EMADEDDIN BAGHI from Evin on health grounds after he suffered two heart attacks, which he has related to the deplorable condition in which he and others were held.

On the other hand, we are grieved to report that the situation of two of our scholars has seriously worsened. LÜ GENGSONG, the Chinese writer and human rights advocate, was tried on January 22, 2008, and sentenced to four years in prison on charges of "inciting subversion of state power." According to Human Rights in China (HRIC), his condition has recently deteriorated and his wife has written an open letter demanding immediate medical care for her husband and pleading for his early release. The letter describes the authorities' refusal to accept clothing and medicine from the family for Lü, restrictions on his use of the toilet, and imposition of isolated confinement.

Also, the condition of 'AREF DALILAH, the Syrian economics professor we featured in our Fall 2007 issue, has severely worsened: he is gravely ill with deep-vein thrombosis in one leg and a blood clot in his lungs. According to Amnesty International, his doctors have reported that he may die if he is not allowed to be admitted to a hospital immediately.

The following scholars also remain in prison: KO AUNG HTUN (Burma), HU SHIGEN (China), IGOR SUTYAGIN (Russia), ZHENG YICHUN (China), and XU ZERONG (China). Their details, as well as means to support them, can be found on our website at <[www.socres.org/EndangeredScholars](http://www.socres.org/EndangeredScholars)>.

—Written by John Clegg