

UA 16/22

AI Index MDE 20/5265/2022 of 23 February 2022

**OMAN  
SHUHUH TRIBE MEMBER FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED**

The Omani Internal Security Agency has subjected Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi, a member of the Shuhuh tribe, to an enforced disappearance, a crime under international law, since his arbitrary arrest on 19 December 2021. His whereabouts are unknown and he is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Amnesty International urges the Omani authorities to disclose Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi's whereabouts and release him immediately.

On 19 December 2021, Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi went to the police station in the town of Dibba al-Baya, Musandam governorate, Oman, with his wife and three of their children to collect ID cards for their children. His wife stayed in the car outside the police station. At the station, police officers acting under orders of officers from the Internal Security Agency, detained Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi without presenting a warrant or any other legal document, then searched his car and confiscated his phone. His family was not informed about the reason for his arrest, and they have not heard from him since that day.

Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi is a relative of one of the members of the Shuhuh tribe previously subjected to an unfair trial. Trial documents revealed that the authorities had targeted the individuals based on their online browsing habits in relation to Oman's Musandam province and the Shuhuh tribe that lives there.

On 24 January 2022, Amnesty International wrote to the Omani Human Rights Commission seeking their assistance in confirming Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi's whereabouts, the reason for his arrest and any charges he may be facing. They have yet to respond.

**Write to the Minister of the Interior urging him to:**

- immediately release Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi, unless he is promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in accordance with international law and standards
- pending his release, disclose his whereabouts and to provide him with prompt and regular access to his family, lawyer and any medical attention he may require and ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment

**Write to:**

Hamood bin Faysal al-Busaeedi  
Ministry of Interior  
al-Wazarat St., 3415 Way  
al-Khuwayr, Muscat  
Sultanate of Oman

Email: [MinisterOff@moi.gov.om](mailto:MinisterOff@moi.gov.om)  
Twitter: @moigovom  
Salutation: Your Excellency:

**And Copy:**

Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman  
2535 Belmont Road NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
USA  
Phone: 1 202 387 1980  
Fax: 1 202 745 4933

**Additional information**

Masoud Ali Abdullah al-Shahi (48) is a member of the Shuhuh tribe. In the course of 2020, he lost his job in a private company in the UAE due to the pandemic and returned to Musandam. The Shuhuh tribe exists on both sides of the UAE-Omani border and its members make up the majority of the residents of Musandam, known locally as Ru'us al-Jibal, which is a territorial exclave of Oman. The Shuhuh tribe and Musandam province have culturally distinct practices from mainland Oman, including the manner of dress and agricultural and animal husbandry practices. Their practice of Islam also differs from the Ibadi sect that predominates in Oman.

There have been waves of arbitrary detentions of Musandam residents championing the region's local history and culture since 2015, and reliable reports of arbitrary detention of Shuhuh tribe members in Musandam dating back at least to 1991. In addition, the government has repeatedly undertaken demolitions of homes on the pretext that they are in violation of building codes. Authorities have often expropriated lands for state use after demolishing the homes built on them. Since September 2014, the "immediate removal team" of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities & Water Resources has announced the imminent or completed demolition of dwellings and other local structures in Musandam's Dibba, Khasab, and Bukha municipalities on at least 15 occasions.

Between May and April 2018, five men, all from the Shuhuh tribe and including a national of the United Arab Emirates, were arrested and subject to enforced disappearance for several months. Between August and October 2018, following an unfair trial, a court in Muscat [sentenced](#) the five men to life imprisonment on charges that included "using information technology to prejudice the security and unity of the country and its territories". On 17 November 2019, the Sultan pardoned four of the five prisoners who were released a year later. The fifth man was released in April 2021. One of the victims, after his release, spoke with Amnesty International and confirmed that he was tortured. Oman severely curtails freedom of expression in the country resulting in the prosecution of critics, activists and peaceful demonstrators.