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SAUDI ARABIA PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE RELEASED, STILL SILENCED

On July 13, 2025, Saudi human rights defender and prisoner of conscience Abdulaziz al-Shubaily was conditionally released after serving an eight-year prison sentence. He is now subject to an eight-year travel ban and is prohibited from using social media. Al-Shubaily was sentenced following an unfair trial for his peaceful activism and work with one of Saudi Arabia's few independent human rights groups.

No further action is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

Abdulaziz al-Shubaily was detained on September 17, 2017, after years of legal harassment tied to his human rights work. On May 29, 2016, the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) sentenced him to eight years in prison. He was also banned from traveling and using social media for another eight years following his release.

He was convicted of charges such as "insulting the integrity of the judicial system," "inciting public opinion against the rulers," and "violating the Anti-Cyber Crime Law" by signing statements that called for demonstrations. He was also punished for refusing to abide by a court order to shut down the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). The court ordered him to sign a pledge not to resume his activism.

In March 2015, al-Shubaily faced additional charges for "communicating with foreign organizations," including sharing information with Amnesty International for use in two of its reports.

Abdulaziz al-Shubaily is a founding member of ACPRA, which was one of Saudi Arabia's few independent human rights organizations before being forcibly disbanded. The group reported on human rights violations and supported families of individuals held without charge by helping them bring cases against the Ministry of Interior.

Over the past decade, Saudi authorities have targeted ACPRA members with arrests, trials, and long prison sentences. Al-Shubaily acted as the legal representative for nine of the 11 ACPRA members who have been prosecuted since December 2012. His release is welcome, but the conditions imposed on him remain a violation of his basic rights to freedom of expression and movement.