

13 December 2019

### **Iraq: Arbitrary detention of human rights defenders Omar Al-Amri and Salman Khairallah**

On 11 December 2019, human rights defenders Omar Al-Amri and Salman Khairallah were arbitrarily detained regarding their participation in the peaceful demonstrations in Baghdad.

[Salman Khairallah](#) is an environmental human rights defender, member of the Iraqi Social Forum, and works on water pollution issues in Iraq. He also contributes to the campaign 'Protect Tigris' which works on minimizing the pollution in the Tigris river. Salman Khairallah regularly participates in the anti-corruption demonstrations which started in early October 2019.

[Omar Al-Amri](#) is a human rights defender and member of the Iraqi Social Forum. He works on social and economic rights in Iraq, including by blogging about these issues.

On 11 December the two human rights defenders were on their way to buy tents for the protesters at Liberation Square in Baghdad when they disappeared for several hours. They were located through their phones with the help of a telecommunications company. Since then, Omar Al-Amri and Salman Khairallah have been arbitrarily detained.

The two human rights defenders were not allowed to have their lawyer present during interrogation, nor have they been allowed any contact with their lawyer. Family visits and calls have also not been permitted since their detention. The two human rights defenders are still held for interrogation.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the arbitrary detention of two human rights defenders Omar Al-Amri and Salman Khairallah. Front Line Defenders believes that they are being targeted solely because of their peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

#### **Front Line Defenders urge the Iraqi Authorities to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Omar Al-Amri and Salman Khairallah, as Front Line Defenders believes that they are being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Allow the above human rights defenders immediate and unfettered access to their families and lawyers;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Iraq are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.