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## **Saudi Arabia: Ongoing crackdown on women rights' defenders**

On 17 May, Saudi authorities detained human rights defender Lujain Al-Hathloul at her home in Riyadh amid an ongoing crackdown on human rights defenders, including women's rights defenders. She has not yet faced charges.

Lujain Al-Hathloul is a women's rights defenders and blogger who has advocated for gender equality and women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia. She has been actively participating in the Saudi Women Driving Campaign since 2013, and has posted videos of herself encouraging women to drive their cars within the context of this campaign.

On 17 May, Saudi authorities detained Lujain Al-Hathloul, along with several other human rights defenders and activists who have been campaigning for women's rights. Among the other detainees are Dr. Ibrahim AlModaimeegh, Dr. Aisha AlMana, Madeha AlAjroush, Aziza AlYousef, Professor Eman AlNafjan, and Mohammad AlRabea. Lujain Al-Hathloul is being held in incommunicado detention and denied an access to her lawyers and family.

This is not the first time the Saudi authorities have have targeted Lujain Al-Hathlul. She was briefly detained in June 2017 at Dammam airport and banned from travelling. She was also arrested in December 2014 and spent more than two months in detention on charges of "breaching public order" and "overriding the guardian's authority".

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned about the detention of human rights defender Lujain Al-Hathloul and is worried about her safety and physical well being.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Saudi Arabia to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Lujain Al-Hathloul and other human rights defenders who have been recently detained, as Front Line Defenders believes that they are being held solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful human rights work;
2. Allow Lujain Al-Halthloul immediate and unfettered access to her family and her lawyers;
3. Ensure that Lujain Al-Hathloul's treatment, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
4. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Lujain Al-Hathloul;
5. Cease targeting all human rights defenders and bloggers in Saudi Arabia in all circumstances, so that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.