Sister of Saudi Blogger Raif Badawi Arrested and Jailed in Same Prison

January 12, 2016

By [Jessica Murphy](http://www.theguardian.com/profile/jessica-murphy)

The Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/12/samar-badawi-sister-blogger-raif-badawi-arrested-saudi-arabia?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=New%20Campaign&utm_term=%2AMideast%20Brief>’

Samar Badawi, a prominent Saudi human rights advocate – and the sister of [jailed blogger Raif Badawi](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/11/flogging-global-outrage-saudi-arabia-silent) – has been arrested and is being held in the same prison as her brother, according to activists and family members.

In a series of tweets Raif Badawi’s wife, Ensaf Haidar, said Samar had been arrested and transferred to Dharhan central prison after four hours of questioning.

According to Haidar, Amnesty International and the [Raif Badawi Foundation](http://www.raifbadawifoundation.org/) – a Canadian advocacy group – Samar is believed to have been arrested Tuesday for posting to a Twitter account used to campaign for the release of her former husband, Waleed Abu al-Khair, and for publishing of photo of him in jail.

Abu al-Khair is a Saudi human rights lawyer currently serving a 15-year sentence, in part for defending Raif Badawi.

In a statement, Amnesty called Samar’s arrest “the latest example of Saudi Arabia’s utter contempt for its human rights obligations and provides further damning proof of the authorities’ intent to suppress all signs of peaceful dissent”.

Raif Badawi has been imprisoned in Saudi Arabia since 2012 and was sentenced in 2014 by a Saudi court to [10 years in jail and 1,000 lashes](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/11/saudi-blogger-raif-badawi-next-lashes-friday) for insulting Islam and criticizing the regime on his blog. He received 50 lashes just over one year ago.

His wife came to Canada with the couple’s three children in 2013 and has been a tireless campaigner for his release.

Raif Badawi’s imprisonment has received condemnation from human rights groups and others abroad and in Canada, though he is not a Canadian citizen.

Canada’s foreign affairs minister, Stephane Dion, discussed Badawi’s case with his Saudi Arabian counterpart when he visited Ottawa in December.

In February, prior to the Liberals’ 19 October federal election win, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with Haidar and expressed support for Raif Badawi’s cause, though he told the Canadian Press last month he had no “immediate plans” to personally intervene on his behalf.

On Tuesday, the Center for Inquiry, an American advocacy group, also called on the US state department “to bring to bear what diplomatic power they have to press [Saudi Arabia](http://www.theguardian.com/world/saudiarabia) to release Samar”.

Samar received the 2012 International Women of Courage award for her efforts to promote women’s equality in Saudi Arabia.