

# Right Livelihood

## 57th Session of the Human Rights Council

### Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

Thank you, Mr. President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Abdullah al-Qahtani, son of Dr. Mohammed al-Qahtani, an outstanding Saudi human rights defender.

Mohammed al-Qahtani was a founding member of the now-dissolved Saudi Association for Civil and Political Rights (ACPRA). For his human rights work, he was arrested in 2013, and sentenced to 10 years.

Since the end of his sentence, instead of being released, Mohammed al-Qahtani has been forcibly disappeared. It's been almost 2 years now.

The Saudi authorities have failed to clarify his fate and whereabouts, and his case is pending before the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances since November 2023.

The Saudi Commission President recently told US diplomats that Dr. al-Qahtani was in contact with his family, they lied and denied that he was in a state of enforced disappearance.

Mr. President,

Despite the high risk of reprisals to his father, Abdullah and his family call on all States and this Council to demand that the Saudi government immediately and unconditionally release Dr. al-Qahtani.

Today, he wants to urge all of you to help in pushing for access to the country by independent experts - and to have prisons visited by human rights organisations so that the false claims of the authorities can be challenged transparently.

Thank you, Mr. President.