

Saudi woman sentenced to 34 years in prison for tweets

The Saudi woman who was sentenced to six years in prison for criticising her government on Twitter will now be serving 34 years after failing to plead her case in an appeals court.



Source: www.unsplash.com

According to [ifex](#) Salma al-Shehab had appealed her six-year sentence claiming that she was unaware that her tweets amounted to a crime and that her 2,000 following base was too small to “disrupt the order and fabric of society.”

On 9 August 2022, the appeals court instead decided to increase her sentence and stated that her original sentence failed to achieve “restraint and deterrence.”

Her case has highlighted the issue of media freedom in the Middle Eastern country.



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Aphiwe Kunene 25 Jul 2022



Washington director at Human Rights Watch Sarah Yager said the ruling was unfair on al-Shehab.

“Saudi authorities clearly feel empowered to crush any dissent and Saudi women in particular. The US, France, and other governments that have diplomatically embraced the kingdom should promptly and publicly condemn this ruling,” said Yager.

Amnesty International has also made calls for her release.

“ *The Saudi Arabian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Salma al-Shehab.*

pic.twitter.com/SUOA53gCoG

— Amnesty International (@amnesty) [August 18, 2022](#) ”

Al-Shebab was detained in January 2021 while on a visit to Saudi Arabia and a few days before she planned to return to the United Kingdom, where she was a PhD candidate in her final year at the School of Medicine at the University of Leeds.

She is a mother of two children, six and four. According to the [BBC](#) Al-Shehab tweeted or retweeted calls for reforms in Saudi Arabia and the release of activists and intellectuals who had been arrested by the government.

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