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**Press Release**

Contact: [FreeLoujain@gmail.com](mailto:FreeLoujain@gmail.com)

## *Loujain AlHathloul Sentenced to 5 Years and 8 Months in Prison for her Activism by the Specialised Criminal Court in Saudi Arabia.*

**WORLD | 28 Dec 2020** - After 958 days in detention, a majority of which was spent in pre-trial detention, Loujain AlHathloul a leading Saudi women's rights activist was sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in prison in court today by the Specialised Criminal Court (terrorism court). The sentence includes a suspension of 2 years and 10 months in addition to the time already served (since May 2018) which would see Loujain's release in approximately two months. Loujain is also required to serve three years of probation during which time she could be arrested for any perceived illegal activity. She will also be placed on a 5 year travel ban.

Loujain AlHathloul was charged with terrorism and labeled a [traitor](#) after her and other Saudi Activists were forcibly imprisoned after the driving ban was lifted by the Saudi Kingdom in May 2018. Loujain was one of the [leaders](#) of the Women2Drive campaign and fought for reforms on multiple fronts in Saudi Arabia. She was one of the first women to stand for elections in Saudi Arabia in 2015 - the first year that women were allowed both to vote and stand for elections. Loujain was working with other activists to open the first shelter for women fleeing domestic violence and she led the efforts to end male guardianship in the Saudi Kingdom.

The Saudi authorities instead of recognising Loujain and other activists for their efforts in pushing for reforms labeled them as traitors in a public campaign without any evidence in May 2018. During her time in prison Loujain has been subjected to multiple forms of [torture](#) to include waterboarding, flogging, electrocution and sexual assault. Loujain has also endured two hunger strikes and psychological torture as a result leaving her in weekend health.

After nearly three years in pre-trial detention Loujain's case was transferred to the Specialised Criminal Court on 25 Nov 2020. Since then the courts have rushed through the trial process in the past 4 weeks and have failed to provide evidence beyond Loujain's well noted activism and failed to properly investigate the torture Loujain endured in prison.

"After nearly three years in pre-trial detention and now 5 weeks of a rushed trial process in the Specialised Criminal Court, my sister Loujain was sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in prison by the Specialised Criminal Court today. She was charged, tried and convicted using counter-terrorism laws. Loujain and my parents (who are her lawyers) were given little time to prepare so it is hard to understand how this trial process is a fair one. My sister is not a terrorist, she is an activist. To be sentenced for her activism for the very reforms that MBS and the Saudi Kingdom so proudly tout is the ultimate hypocrisy. My sister is the bravest person I know, and while we are devastated that she will have to spend even one more day in prison, our fight is far from over. We will not rest until Loujain is free," said Lina AlHathloul.

The full timeline of the Specialised Criminal Court Timeline is noted below.

### **Specialised Criminal Court Timeline:**

- **24 Nov 2020** - Saudi officials notified the family that Loujain's trial would commence tomorrow (25 Nov 2020). Loujain's parents are her legal representatives for the case, they had one day to prepare for the trial.
- **25 Nov 2020** - Loujain's case was transferred to the specialised terrorism court and the court has said it will open an investigation with the prosecution regarding torture. Loujain gave more information regarding her hunger strike (see below)
- **9 Dec 2020** - Saudi officials notified the family in the evening (with less than 24 hours notice) that Loujain's first trial session at the Specialised Criminal Court would be held the following day 10 Dec
- **1st Trial Session** - 10 Dec 2020 - The prosecution called for a maximum sentence for Loujain and changed the charges without permission or notification. All charges and changes can be seen here:  
<https://www.loujainalhathloul.org/arrest-torture-charges#trial>
- **2nd Trial Session** - 14 Dec 2020 - Loujain appeared for her second trial appearance at the Specialised Criminal Court. Loujain handed in her defense and was given the evidence against her by the prosecution which include:

- Tweets about her involvement in the #Women2Drive campaign
- Contacting Amnesty International to speak about the situation of activists in Saudi Arabia
- Audio recordings of Loujain speaking about the male guardianship system.
- **3rd Trial Session** - 16 December 2020 - the judge said that he will compare Loujain's defense and the prosecutor's response. This is the first time the judge says this comparison will be done.
- **Criminal Court Hearing** - 17 Dec 2020 - During today's hearing, Loujain and her father were briefed on a secret report on the torture of Loujain. In their summary the Public Prosecution denied the torture charges brought by Loujain, and said that prison cameras do not store photos for more than 40 days.
- **4th Trial Session** - 21 December 2020 - The SCC judge said that they are waiting for the final torture report from the criminal court (a criminal court hearing took place on 17 Dec - see timeline below) and fixed a new date for a hearing to be held on Thursday 24 Dec 2020. An additional session at the criminal court (regular court) in regards to the torture investigation is scheduled for Tuesday 22 Dec 2020.
- **Criminal Court Hearing** - 22 December 2020 - During Loujain's hearing at the criminal court today, the judge gave her a secret report concluding the "investigation" regarding her torture. He asked her to give her response to the report on the same day. He then sent his final report (in which he denies torture) to the SCC.
- **5th Trial Session** - 24 Dec 2020 - The SCC judge delayed the next hearing until Monday 28 Dec 2020 and notified Loujain and her family in court.
- **6th Trial Session** - 28 Dec 2020 - Loujain AlHathloul a leading Saudi women's rights activist was sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in prison in court today by the Specialised Criminal Court (terrorism court). The sentence includes a suspension of 2 years and 10 months in addition to the time already served (since May 2018) which would see Loujain's release in approximately two months. Loujain is also required to serve three years of probation during which time she could be arrested for any perceived illegal activity. She will also be placed on a 5 year travel ban.

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**ABOUT** : We are family and supporters of Loujain AlHathloul whose mission is to fight for Loujain's freedom.

**WEBSITE:** <http://loujainalhathloul.org/>

**MEDIA CONTACT:** For media requests please contact [FreeLoujain@gmail.com](mailto:FreeLoujain@gmail.com)