

Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2 March 2021

Contact: FreeLoujain@gmail.com

Loujain AlHathloul in Terrorism Court today for her Appeal Hearing.

WORLD | 2 March 2021 -- Today Saudi women's rights activist Loujain AlHathloul appeared in the Specialised Criminal Court today for her appeal hearing. Today was the first-day Loujain appeared in court without being handcuffed or blindfolded. The appeal hearing is a continuation of the sentencing of Loujain that took place on 28 Dec 2020 (see the timeline below).

Loujain was imprisoned for 1001 days after being sentenced on 28 Dec 2020 under terrorism laws for her work campaigning for the right to drive and for women's rights. Her sentence includes numerous restrictions including a pledge that Loujain had to sign as part of her release which states that she cannot speak publicly about her case or reveal any details regarding prison nor celebrate her release on a public level.

Today in the Specialised Criminal Court the Loujain AlHathloul appeared for the start of her appeal hearing for the sentencing to 5 years and 8 months in prison. During the hearing:

- The public prosecution objected to the 5 years and 8 months sentence and demanded a cancellation of the suspended portion of the sentence and asked for an increase of the sentence.
- The judge asked Loujain if she regretted what she had done and wanted to submit an apology before the judges.
- Loujain replied that she had proven in all her defenses that she had not committed any crime based on local and international laws. So, on what basis would she present her repentance?

The session was adjourned until next Wednesday 10 March 2021. The #FreeLoujain campaign will provide further details from today's appeal hearing as we formalise them on our website within the coming days.

The Free Loujain campaign demands include:

- Bring those who tortured Loujain to justice, including Saud Al-Qahtani
- Drop all charges against Loujain
- Lift the travel ban on Loujain and the entire family
- Reparations to Loujain for illegal imprisonment and kidnapping
- Hold local newspapers and Saudi media accountable for defamation

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 @ SCC** - 21 Dec 2020 - During the hearing that day, no verdict was given. The judge at the SCC said he is waiting for the final report on torture that has to be sent by the normal criminal court. A new hearing was scheduled at the SCC on 24 Dec 2020. A new hearing regarding the torture was scheduled at the normal criminal court on 22 Dec 2020.
- **Criminal Court Hearing** - 22 Dec 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** - 23 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's sentence includes:
 - A five years and 8 months imprisonment, with a suspension based on different conditions
 - A five-year travel ban which means she cannot leave Saudi Arabia
 - A three-year probationary period that would prevent her from continuing her advocacy work for equal rights for women as it is what she was accused of and charged for.
 - Labeling as a terrorist in Saudi Arabia.

9 Feb 2021 - Loujain's parents were called to the criminal court for a hearing regarding the torture investigation appeal. Loujain and her parents received the decision of the court of appeals regarding Loujain's appeal to the criminal court on her torture in the secret prison. For more information, check our [Investigation Of The Torture Page](#)

- **10 Feb 2021** - After 1001 days in prison, [Loujain AlHathloul was released from prison](#). The family held a press briefing on 11 Feb 2021 which can be viewed [here](#).

- **Loujain AlHathloul had to sign a pledge as part of her release that states that she cannot:**
 - 1. Speak publicly about her case or reveal any detail regarding prison (what happens in prison, or uncover names of employees or their work).
 - 2. Celebrate her release on a public level
- If ever any of the two terms are breached, Loujain would be culpable and would serve the remainder of her suspended sentence as well as facing additional charges if necessary and appropriate.
- The #FreeLoujain campaign notes that the probation terms and pledge are monitored by the same system that arrested and illegally imprisoned Loujain along with other Saudi Activists in May 2018.

2 March 2021- Today in the Specialised Criminal Court the Loujain AlHathloul appeared for the start of her appeal hearing for the sentencing to 5 years and 8 months in prison. **The session was adjourned until next Wednesday 10 March 2021.** During the hearing:

- The public prosecution objected to the 5 years and 8 months sentence and demanded a cancellation of the suspended portion of the sentence and asked for an increase of the sentence.
- The judge asked Loujain if she regretted what she had done and wanted to submit an apology before the judges.
- Loujain replied that she had proven in all her defenses that she had not committed any crime based on local and international laws. So, on what basis would she present her repentance?

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