

Abdallah ibn al-Saud

Royal palace

Born : 1924 (officially)

SAUDI ARABIA

King



Training/education

Religious instruction at the palace.

Professional experience

10 March 2006: Orders arrest of Internet user Mohsen al-Awajy for criticising the government online (released on 21 March).

1 August 2005: Proclaimed king on death of his half-brother Fahd.

2 May 2004: Orders all copies of the daily paper *Al-Watan* seized and replaced by another version.

March 2004: Orders arrest of a dozen reformist intellectuals for criticising in the press abuses of power by religious figures and signing a petition in late 2003 calling for a constitutional monarchy.

July–November 2003: Censors about 100 newspapers.

October 2003: Orders jamming of *Al-Islah*, the first and only opposition radio station broadcasting to the country from the outside.

27 May 2003: Orders dismissal of *Al-Watan* editor Jamal Kashoggi for printing articles criticising the religious authorities.

February 2003: Bans satellite TV station *Al-Jazeera* from covering the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

21 April 2002: Orders seizure at airport of video cassettes and laptop computer from journalist Bob Arnot, of US cable TV station *MSNBC*.

22 March 2002: Imposes prior censorship on the London-based Arab-language Saudi daily *Al-Hayat*.

18 March 2002: Orders dismissal of editor Mohamed al-Mokhtar al-Fal, of the privately-owned *Al-Madina*.

April 2000: Arrest, trial and sentencing to seven years in prison of journalist Saleh Al-Harith (later pardoned).

1995: Appointed regent after King Fahd has a stroke.

1962: Commander of the National Guard.

Hobbies/interests

Camel-racing: he founded the country's first camel-racing festival, which became the Janadriya Heritage and Cultural Festival.