[OMANI AUTHORITIES ARBITRARILY DETAIN INDIVIDUALS IN MUSANDAM GOVERNORATE](https://monitor.civicus.org/newsfeed/2018/08/30/omani-authorities-arbitrarily-detain-individuals-musandam-governorate/)

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According to [Amnesty International](https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE2086422018ENGLISH.pdf) and the [Omani Centre for Human Rights](https://ochroman.org/eng/mussandem/), since 6th April 2018 the Omani authorities have arbitrarily arrested and detained individuals from Musandam province. They are believed to be in the custody of the Internal Security Service in the capital Muscat, the reasons for their detention and/or charges are not yet very clear.

On 6th April 2018 Omani security forces detained Emirati citizen Rashed Saeed Al-Salhadi Al-Shahi while he was attending a relative's wedding party in Al-Rawda, Musandam. Three days later, on 9th April, Ali Mohamed al-Mazyoud al-Shehhi was arrested from his father’s home after a security forces turned up at the house without a warrant of arrest. The security officials did not disclose the reason for his arrest. On the same day, Ali Ahmad Rajab al-Shehhi was arrested in a similar manner from his place of residence in Lima town, Musandam.

On 5th May 2018, United Arab Emirates police, acting on a request from the Omani authorities arrested Mohamed Abdullah Ahmad al-Shehhi, a native of Musandam, in Dubai and handed him over to the Omani authorities the same day. Later that month, on 28th May 2018, Omani forces detained Mohammed Sulaiman Mohammed Mazyud Al-Shahi at the Al-Dara border with the UAE as he was returning to Musandam from Saudi Arabia. He was returning home after completing the ‘umrah' pilgrimage to Mecca.

Latest [reports](https://ochroman.org/eng/mussandam/) indicate that the five detainees have now been sent for trial. Their matters were last heard in court on 26th August even as their lawyers were denied access to their client's court files. As Amnesty notes, 'the Omani government maintains an almost complete media blackout on detentions in “security” cases', and so public information on the progress of these cases is scanty.

The same reports also indicate that on 17th July, another native of Musandam, Ali Saeed al-Hamoudi al-Shehhi was arrested and detained by Omani authorities. Several other people who were called in for questioning at around that date were all allowed to go free after signing pledges not to engage in social media.

While no reasons have officially been given for the spate of arrests, Amnesty International stated that these arbitrary arrests may be motivated in part by discrimination because the detainees are members of the Al-Shuhuh tribe, a community with culturally distinct practices from mainland Oman, and whose members make up the majority of the residents in Musandam. Amnesty also notes that there have been previous waves of arbitrary detention in Musandam in 2015 and 2016 where, people were arrested for using google and twitter to find information on and discuss the history of Musandam. In addition, in 2016, a local folkloric music group were detained, but released after several weeks without charge.