

## Saudi dissident held without charge

by UPI

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia -- The lawyer for a Saudi political activist said no charges have been filed against his client, who has been held in solitary confinement a year. Saudi authorities detained Saud Mokhtar al-Hashemi, 45, and 10 others in February for allegedly sending illegal funds to Iraqi insurgents. Hashemi's supporters say his arrest is part of an attempt by the Saudi monarchy to quell his calls for democratic reform, The Washington Post said Thursday. "This prolonged detention without charge and without access to counsel is illegal and in violation of the country's rules," attorney Bassim Alim, said. Prisoners in Saudi Arabia have basic legal rights, such as the right to counsel and public trials, but Saudi law permits detention for up to six months without charge. Saudi officials say Hashemi remains in custody because the case is "still under investigation."

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