

## Seven inmates die in Saudi Arabia prison fire

At least seven inmates died and many others were injured in a prison fire in eastern Saudi Arabia, a senior security official said Monday.

'The fire that erupted in al-Ehsa prison Sunday evening caused 16 inmates and three security men to nearly suffocate,' the director of Saudi prisons, Major-General Ali bin Hussein al-Harhi, said in a statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

Seven prisoners died upon arrival in hospital.

Al-Harhi added that the fire broke out in a ward of the prison.

The prison authorities immediately evacuated 1,275 prisoners from the wards until the fire was brought under control.

An investigation into the fire is under way.

In November, al-Ehsa prison was the scene of violent protests by inmates who clashed with jailers. Many on both sides were injured.

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