

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
R O U N D T A B L E

Washington, D.C.

October 27, 2014

King Abdullah bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Sa’ud
Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
Royal Court
Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 11111

Your Royal Majesty,

We write to you regarding Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, a Saudi citizen and religious scholar, who was sentenced to death on Wednesday 15 October after he was convicted of disobeying the ruler, firing on security forces, sowing discord, undermining national unity, and interfering in the affairs of a sisterly nation.

We are particularly concerned because Nimr al-Nimr did not receive a fair trial. On multiple occasions, the judge did not allow al-Nimr to properly prepare his defense. Al-Nimr was denied the right to cross-examine the witnesses against him. Additionally, all confessions were obtained under duress through coercive means. Moreover, throughout the trial, the court did not observe the basic rules of due process and fairness, therefore rendering the conviction gravely unsound and unreliable. On this account, we call on you as a prominent leader in the Muslim world and as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to pardon Nimr al-Nimr without delay and to ensure that he is released from prison.

Sheikh al-Nimr is a peaceful activist who has never called for violence. This sentence is in violation of freedom of expression, freedom of religious and political association, and freedom of assembly.

Under your leadership, the Kingdom has seen remarkable improvements to the human rights conditions in the country. The establishment of the Saudi National Society for Human Rights and the Saudi Human Rights Commission stand testaments to your unprecedented human rights reform in the history of the Kingdom.

As a newly elected member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, it is more important than ever for Saudi Arabia to set an example for neighboring countries about human rights and clemency. A pardon on your part will clearly demonstrate to the world Saudi Arabia’s serious interest in promoting human rights.

We call on you to take urgent steps to implement your pardon of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

American Humanist Association

American Islamic Congress

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

Center for Inquiry

Church of Scientology National Affairs Office

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – United Kingdom

Coptic Solidarity

Freemuslim, Center for De-Radicalization and Extremism Prevention

European Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR)

Hindu American Foundation

Human Rights Law Foundation

International Center for Religion and Diplomacy

International Institute for Religious Freedom

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church of America

Shia Rights Watch

Shirazi Foundation

Universal Muslim Association of America (UMAA)

Venn Institute

Individuals

Mustafa Akhwand

Director

Shia Rights Watch

Greg Mitchell
President
The Mitchell Firm

Dr. Joel C. Hunter
Senior Pastor
Northland – A Church Distributed

Amjad Mahmood Khan
National Director of Public Affairs
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA

Paul Marshall
Senior Fellow, Center for Religious Freedom
Hudson Institute

Scott Morgan
President
Red Eagle Enterprises

CC: H.E. Adel A Al-Jubeir, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States;
H.E. Joseph W. Westphal, United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
Ambassador Baudelaire Ndong Elle, President of the United Nation Human Rights Council;
Saudi National Society for Human Rights; Saudi Human Rights Commission