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Representing Europe's lawyers

19/04/2007

King Abdullah Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty The King
Royal Court
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Re: Concerns regarding the cases of Mr. Sulaiman al-Rashudi and Mr. Essam al-Basrawi, lawyers, Mr. Saud al-Hashimi, a doctor, Mr. Musa al-Qirni and Mr. Abdel Rahman al-Shumayri, university professors, Mr. Abdelaziz al-Khariji and Mr. Al-Sharif Saif Al-Ghalib.

Your Royal Highness,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 700,000 European lawyers.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concerns over the ongoing incommunicado detention of the above-mentioned human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia. We are told that all of them are known for their peaceful human rights activities. In particular, they engaged in the past in signing petitions addressed to your Majesty calling upon you to initiate political and democratic reforms in the Kingdom and to respect human rights.

Although the men are reportedly suspected of "*illegally collecting money and funnelling funds to suspicious elements outside the country*", no official charge has been brought against them.

The CCBE is alarmed by the situation of these ten men because, since their arrest, neither their lawyers nor their relatives have been granted access to them, despite their repeated requests.

It is important to outline that Mr. Basem Alam, one of their lawyers, is also apparently subjected to acts of harassment due to his involvement in this case. For instance, he was prevented from leaving the country by the authorities.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw your attention to the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially its article 1, which states that:

"Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels";

and article 12.2 which states that:

"the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration."

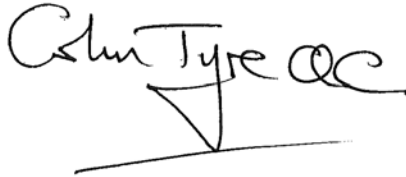
Conseil des barreaux européens – Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe

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In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to guarantee, in all circumstances, the psychological and physical integrity of these human rights defenders, and assure their right to receive visits and to communicate with their lawyers and relatives. Finally, we would urge your Majesty to release them immediately and unconditionally.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin Tyre QC". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'C' at the beginning and a horizontal line underneath the name.

Colin Tyre QC
President

Copy to:

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