



## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

### ANTI-TERROR LAW USED AS A COVER UP FOR TORTURE BY SAUDI ARABIA



*5 beheaded bodies in Saudi Arabia*

The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman is busy trying to convince us of the social and economic reforms in Saudi Arabia, although Saudi Arabia is undergoing the most ruthless crackdown on political dissent that the country has experienced in decades. Amongst other vile human rights violations, women's rights activists who campaign to lift the ban on driving were handed out prison sentences, and between 2009 and 2015 more than 3,000 allegations of torture were formally recorded. The 2014 Terror Law designed to systematically justify torture, suppress all dissent and imprison human rights defenders has a broad definition of terrorist crimes.

**ICSFT in special consultative status with the ECOSOC** / Center Oecumenique des eglise 150, Route de Ferney 1211, Offices: 191&192, Geneva, Switzerland, Tel: +41227884808/ 5&6- Fax:+ 41227884807- Website: [www.icsft.net](http://www.icsft.net)- Email: [uncoordinator@icsft.net](mailto:uncoordinator@icsft.net) / [info@icsft.net](mailto:info@icsft.net)



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It states the definition of terrorism as “directly or indirectly intended to disturb the public order of the state, or to destabilize the security of society, or the stability of the state, or to expose its national unity to danger, or to suspend the basic law of governance or some of its articles, or to insult the reputation of the state or its standing, or to inflict damage upon one of its public utilities or its natural resources.”

The UN’s special rapporteur on anti-terrorism, the British QC Ben Emmerson, following his official visit to Saudi Arabia said “Those who peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression are systematically persecuted in Saudi Arabia, many languish in prison for years. Others have been executed after blatant miscarriages of justice.” “A culture of impunity prevails for public officials who are guilty of acts of torture and other ill-treatment. Peaceful avenues for redress of grievances are foreclosed by the use of repressive measures to silence civil society.”

In his report Emmerson further states “Reports that Saudi Arabia is liberalizing are completely wide of the mark, the last two years have seen an unprecedented concentration of executive power in the monarchy across every sphere of public life.”

Emmerson further remarked that “it is a matter of shame for the UN that it allowed Saudi onto the UN human rights council (HRC)” in 2016, and warned investors that there was no independent judiciary in the country, making any overseas investment vulnerable to expropriation.”

“The judiciary has now been brought entirely under the control of the king, and lacks any semblance of independence from the executive,” he said. “Put simply, there is no separation of powers in Saudi Arabia, no freedom of expression, no free press, no effective trade unions and no functioning civil society.”



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Well documented reports of the use of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials against individuals accused of having committed acts of terrorism and the use of coerced confessions as sole or decisive evidence in their conviction were submitted to the office of the Special rapporteur. The methods used allegedly include electric shocks, sleep deprivation, being held incommunicado for prolonged periods of solitary detention, and beatings to the head, face, jaw, and feet.

The report adds “Despite this, the special rapporteur is not aware of a single official prosecuted for committing an act of torture or other ill-treatment. The theoretical protections enshrined in law appear illusory in practice.”

Emmerson called for the establishment of an independent national security and due process review mechanism to review all crimes allegedly committed by speech or writing.

He also called for prompt investigation of all allegations of torture and ill-treatment and other serious human rights violations committed under the counter-terrorism and national security framework.

ICSFT echoes the special rapporteur’s recommendations and urged the Saudi authorities to free those wrongfully imprisoned for terrorism offences when in fact they had been exercising their right to free speech, or peaceful assembly. We also urge the regime to comply with international human rights standards and allow citizens to exercise their freedom of expression and association without any restriction or fear of government reprisal.