



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Geneva Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

STOP SUPPORTING SAUDI ARABIA'S FAKE REFORM!



Aziza al-Yousef drives a car on a highway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in March 2014 as part of a campaign to defy Saudi Arabia's ban on women driving¹

Amid Saudi Arabia's Prince Mohammed bin Salman's socio-economic and human rights reform tour including the lifting of the ban on women driving, Saudi Arabia

¹ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/05/23/world/ahead-lifting-ban-women-drivers-saudi-arabia-arrests-rights-advocates-campaigners/>

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- Email: uncoordinator@icsft.net / info@icsft.net



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detained several women's rights activists solely because of their work as human rights defenders and activists on women's rights. They are detained since 15 May, Eman al-Nafjan, Loujain al-Hathloul, Aziz al-Yousef, Aisha al-Manea, Madiha Al-Ajrourh, Walaa al-Shubbar and Hasah al-Sheikhare amongst the illegally detained women activists who have long opposed the driving ban and other gender discriminations in the kingdom.

UN Human Rights Human Rights spokesperson Elizabeth Throssell stated "we urge the Saudi Arabian authorities to reveal their locations, and ensure their rights to due process is guaranteed."

She further noted that "Their exact whereabouts is unknown and most of them have only been permitted to make a single telephone call to their families since they were arrested."

Throssell said "If, as it appears, their detention is related solely to their work as human rights defenders and activists on women's issues, they should be released immediately."

This action is inconsistent with Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's PR messages of reform on which Saudi is trying to whitewash its countless human rights violations. However the crackdown against human rights defenders and women's rights activists is not a new phenomenon for the Saudi regime. International and local human rights organizations and activists have been advocating for human rights reform in the kingdom for decades in vain.

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The latest travesty for reform is another cosmetic cover-up while maintaining the same status-quo that perpetuate systemic discrimination against women and religious minorities.

Despite Saudi Arabia's terrible human rights record for its gross and systemic violations of human rights, western countries including USA, UK, and France have been rolling out the red carpet to Saudi's Prince once again choosing petrol-dollar exchange over human rights.

Censorship of free speech, indiscriminate incarceration of citizens with no due process, or the lack of basic freedoms for women and girls remains to be the norm in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia had jailed almost every founder of the banned Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association for their peaceful pro-reform advocacy. Human rights defenders are equated to terrorists and detained without due process of law. Further since the Saudi-led invasion of Yemen four years ago, Saudi Arabia has committed numerous violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The Saudi-led coalition with the support of western allies are responsible for the war crime in Yemen that has claimed the lives of thousands of innocent Yemeni civilians.

ICSFT Condemns in the strongest terms the arbitrary arrest and detention of women's rights activists and urges the Saudi authorities to release them immediately. We also call up on USA, UK, and France to stop rewarding Saudi Arabia's crimes and arming the kingdom with more weapons that will be used to commit more abuses!

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