



## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION



### **Saudi Arabia: Systemic, Ongoing and Egregious Religious Intolerance**

At ICSFT we stand against all forms of unjust treatment and violations of human rights. **We focus on the issues, and not the politics behind them.** We focus on fair legal processes, and freedom of speech, for all people, regardless of religion, socioeconomic background or country of origin/nationality. We side with justice, equality, and freedom of expression everywhere.

This week, on April 27th, a report was issued that highlighted one area of severe restriction of these issues, and in particular the freedom of the religion.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIR) produced its 2018 Annual report, presenting research and analysis on trends of freedom and/or restriction of religious freedom globally. The Commission is an independent, bipartisan

**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)



# INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

advisory body, that endeavors to provide transparent and fact based analysis on human rights abuses.

Of special note to ICSFT was the review of Saudi Arabia. **The country has been listed by the report as “Tier One” or of highest urgency/ “CPC”** (Country of Particular Concern). The highest incidence of human rights violations in terms of religion are occurring within Tier One countries, according to the USCIR.

The UCSIR notes that Tier One countries, including Saudi Arabia, are “designate[d] as a CPC (Country of Particular Concern) [are] any country whose **government engages in or tolerates particularly severe religious freedom violations, meaning those that are systematic, ongoing, and egregious.**”<sup>1</sup>

Some key findings about ongoing religious discrimination in Saudi Arabia include:

- Saudi Arabia has instituted and maintains a ban on any public non-Muslim demonstrations of religion
- **The country continues to define crime as, prosecute, convict, and provide punishing criminal sentences for “dissent, blasphemy, and apostasy”**
- Atheists may be charged under the new “counter-terrorism” laws, as terrorism has not been clearly defined
- In spite of 15 years of purported work to change the content, **the textbooks in the country continue to actively promote religious violence and intolerance**
- Although the religious-based guardianship system has been officially lifted to an extent, systemic and cultural regulations continue to act it out

ICSFT supports the UCSIR recommendations for state level and multilateral and bilateral international policy change, including, but not limited to the following:

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRFAnnual2018\\_tagged508.pdf](http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRFAnnual2018_tagged508.pdf), pg 9



## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

- **Urge the [Saudi's] government to cooperate fully with international human rights mechanisms, including by inviting visits by the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief;**
- Press the country's government to bring national laws and regulations, including registration requirements for religious communities, into compliance with international human rights standards;
- Press the country's government to conduct professional and thorough investigations— and to prosecute perpetrators—of incidents of sectarian violence, terrorism, and other violations of religious freedom;
- **Press for at the highest levels and work to secure the unconditional release of prisoners of conscience and religious freedom advocates**, and press the country's government to treat prisoners humanely and allow them access to family, human rights monitors, adequate medical care, and lawyers, and the ability to practice their faith;<sup>2</sup>

ICSFT condemns religious intolerance at all levels, and demands that the international community take action, act with integrity towards the international regulatory human rights and humanitarian laws supporting freedom of religion. **It is time for Saudi to treat all people with respect, and to grant them the dignity that their basic human rights demand, regardless of religious background.**

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRFAnnual2018\\_tagged508.pdf](http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRFAnnual2018_tagged508.pdf) pg 11