



## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

### **ICSFT DENOUNCES MASS EXECUTION BY THE SAUDI REGIME**



ICSFT strongly condemns the execution of 37 citizens by the Saudi government. Yesterday, 23 April 2019, Saudi Arabia executed 37 citizens for fabricated and politically motivated charges labelled by the regime as "terrorism"-related crimes, publicly pinning two of the bodies to a pole as a form of warning to other dissidents. Sheikh Mohamed Al-Attiyah was among the 37 who were beheaded by Saudi Arabia. This execution comes a few months after Saudi Arabia committed extrajudicial execution of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

ICSFT sends its deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims. Especially as this ruthless act comes as the Muslims preparing for the Holy month of Ramadan.

Saudi is making history by its record-breaking executions and human rights violations. The sentences were carried out in Riyadh, the Muslim holy cities of

**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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Mecca and Medina, and home to the country's Shia minority. It is being reported that this is the largest mass execution of Shiites in the kingdom's history

As expected the Saudi Arabia's interior ministry released a statement that the prisoners were found guilty of cooperating with "enemy organizations" against the interests of the country. In reality most of executed prisoners are advocates and pro-democracy individuals. According to the authorities anyone who doesn't support the actions of the regime and seeks political and human rights reform is a "threat to stability" of the nation and therefore deserves to be executed.

The majority of those executed were Shia men convicted after unfair trials that violated international standards for free and fair trials and due process, and the guilty verdict was entered following confessions extracted through torture, including beatings and prolonged solitary confinement.

These executions are usually carried out by shooting or beheading with a sword, sometimes in public.

Despite the fake wave of political and human rights reform championed by Prince Mohammed bin Salman, scores of activists, Shia leaders, opposition leaders, journalists, analysts, as well as women's rights defenders who were allegedly tortured by the authorities, are consistently targeted and harassed by the regime for their rights related work with complete impunity.

Saudi Arabia is one of the world's top executioner with execution of 150 prisoners per year since 2015. More than 100 Saudi citizens have been executed during the first four months of 2019. Unfair trials, arbitrary arrests, torture and ill treatment to extract illegal confessions, and false accusations have claimed the lives of many prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia.

Death sentences based on coerced confessions violate international human rights law yet all too common outcome in security-related cases in Saudi Arabia.

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This a clear illustration that the authorities are using the death penalty to settle scores and crush dissent under the guise of combating ‘terrorism’ and maintaining national security.

In light of these concerns we urge western countries like the UK and USA to leverage their close with the regime and press the authorities to comply with international law and improve rights record, and immediately drop all charges and release prisoners of conscience languishing in prison for their peaceful criticism of the regime.

ICSFT demands that Saudi Arabia repeal the death penalty against activists exercising their rights to freedom of expression and opinion as per their commitment to “forgo the application of the death penalty or at least restrict it to the most serious crimes” during their 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR session. We urge the international community to put an end to Saudi Arabia’s continued rights violations once and for all.