



Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy would like to raise our concern over States' continued use of arbitrary detention. For example, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to arbitrarily detain human rights activists, lawyers, and voices of dissent, including members of the Saudi royal family.

For over a decade, Princesses Sahar al-Saud, Jawaher al-Saud, Maha al-Saud, and Hala al-Saud -- all daughters of late-King Abdullah -- have remained under arbitrary house arrest and continue to face acts of ill-treatment, deprivation and psychological abuse which may amount to torture.

In 2001, after these Saudi princesses spoke out in favor of women's rights reform, King Abdullah ordered the Saudi National Guard to place them under house arrest. Over the next 14 years, the National Guard -- under the command of the princesses' half-brother Mutaib bin Abdullah -- prevented the women from leaving their homes and reportedly withheld adequate food, water, and medical care. When their detention became public in 2014, the government allegedly intensified their abuse. According to victims Sahar, Jawaher, Maha, and Hala bin Abdullah al-Saud and their exiled mother, Alanoud al-Fayez, the security forces have subjected them to violent threats, attempted assaults, starvation, and the forced consumption of unknown drugs.

Since King Salman ascended to throne this year, Saudi Arabia has continued to arbitrarily detain human rights activists and peaceful dissenters, including Saudi Princesses. The Kingdom maintains thousands of cases against political prisoners through opaque legal proceedings and harsh security practices.

We therefore urge all states – including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – to actively combat the issue of arbitrary detention, and to release all individuals who are arbitrarily detained, including the imprisoned daughters of the late Saudi King Abdullah.

Thank you.