



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: “Halt Execution of Saudi Minor Ali Mohammed al-Nimr,” say UN Experts

23 September 2015 – Yesterday, United Nations human rights experts urged the Government of Saudi Arabia to halt the execution of Ali Mohammed al-Nimr, a Saudi citizen sentenced to death by beheading and crucifixion. Mr. al-Nimr’s final appeal was recently rejected by the Saudi Supreme Court, and officials may carry out his execution at any time. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) condemns the decision by the Saudi courts and joins the experts in calling for the stay of his execution and an immediate, fair, and impartial retrial of his case.

On 22 September, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Christof Heyns, UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment Juan E. Méndez, and Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Benyam Mezmur [issued a joint statement](#) calling on Saudi authorities to halt the execution of Mr. al-Nimr, and to “establish a moratorium” on the use of the death penalty. The independent human rights experts noted that Saudi officials arrested al-Nimr when he was 17 years old and prosecuted him for crimes supposedly committed as a minor. They determined that his trial conducted by a national security tribunal, violated international fair trial standards, and expressed concern over reports that authorities tortured him into confessing.

“The Human Rights Council and its independent experts provide one of the few international platforms for victims of abuse to raise their cases to the highest levels of government,” said Husain Abdulla, Executive Director of ADHRB. “The statement just issued by the UN experts is evidence of the international community’s continued prioritization of basic human rights in the face of Saudi defiance.”

On the same day, the US Department of State [declined to comment](#) on al-Nimr’s case, stating only that any sentence of capital punishment should come after a trial “in accordance with international legal standards.” When further questioned about U.S. views of Saudi Arabia’s appointment to an [influential advisory body](#) within the UN Human Rights Council, Deputy Spokesperson Mark Toner stated, “... We would welcome it. We’re close allies.”

“As grateful as we are for the statement by the UN experts, we are disappointed in the public comments issued by the United States, especially in light of Saudi Arabia’s well-documented failures to conduct impartial trials,” commented Abdulla. “The US must acknowledge that Saudi Arabia’s greater influence over the UN will result in cases like al-Nimr’s being swept under the rug.”

In light of the allegations of torture suffered by al-Nimr, and of his status as a minor at the time of arrest, ADHRB welcomes the statement of UN experts in bringing international attention to this troubling case and gross violations of international due process standards. We urge the U.S. Department of State to also publicly call for a halt to his imminent execution, and to reconsider its position on Saudi Arabia’s role within the Human Rights Council.

For additional information or to speak with Abdulla, please contact Kate Kizer at [kkizer@adhrb.org](mailto:kkizer@adhrb.org)

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# Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain

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