



Mr. President,

We would like to bring the Council's attention to issues of religious discrimination as identified in the DDPA. For example Saudi Arabia systematically oppresses its Shia Muslim minority population, particularly in the fields of law and cultural rights.

Saudi Arabia has systematically attempted to marginalize Shia Muslims' cultural heritage. Officials have destroyed cemeteries with historic, religious, and cultural significance. Currently, authorities are planning to demolish the historic, 400-year old Shia neighborhood of al-Mosawara in Awamiyah. Officials are cutting power to the area to force residents to leave.

Saudi Arabia's judicial system supports widespread discrimination against the country's Shias. The government tries Shia activists in the country's counter-terrorism, Specialized Criminal Courts, which is ostensibly reserved for violent extremists. For example, in October 2014, the SCC sentenced Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr to death for his peaceful activism, executing him in January 2016. The SCC also ordered the imprisonment and execution of Ali al-Nimr, Abdullah al-Zaher, and Dawood al-Marhoon for taking part in peaceful anti-government protests.

The DDPA commits states to addressing issues of religious discrimination and protecting minorities. We call upon all states, including Saudi Arabia, to uphold their commitments to the Declaration and take concrete steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Thank you