



Mr. President,

Alsalam and ADHRB would like to raise concerns about Saudi Arabia's restrictions on free expression and its targeting of dissident voices, arresting, activists and writers and murdering a journalist with impunity, cases that have been raised by the Special Procedures.

Since 2011, the Saudi government has arrested and imprisoned at least 16 journalists, bloggers, and writers. Then in early October 2018, Saudi expatriate journalist Jamal Khashoggi entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. He did not re-appear and it emerged that Saudi security force personnel murdered Khashoggi dismembered his body on the orders of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Despite this, no high-level Saudi officials or members of the royal family have been held accountable for Khashoggi's death.

While Khashoggi's death attracted significant international attention, he is not the first journalist to be targeted by the Saudi government. There are at least 16 journalists, writers, and bloggers imprisoned in Saudi Arabia. Among those who are in prison are Saleh al-Shehi, a journalist and columnist for *Al-Watan*, Nadhir al-Majid, Wajdi al-Ghazzawi, Alaa Brinji, Marwan al-Mureisi, and Raif Badawi.

More recently, the Saudi government has targeted women human rights defenders, imprisoning over a dozen women rights defenders. Among them are Nour Abbdulaziz and Hatoon al-Fassi and Nassima al-Sada, activists who were also bloggers and writers and who raised deep concerns surrounding the Saudi government's suppression of fundamental human rights.

Saudi Arabia routinely target activists, journalists, and bloggers on expression-related crimes in violation of the universal human right guaranteeing the right to free expression and opinion. Saudi Arabia and the must immediately and unconditionally release all activists detained on free expression charges and amend their domestic laws to lift restrictions on expression.

Thank you,