

French Deputy Jean-Baptiste Moreau (LREM), president of the France-Saudi Arabia parliamentary friendship group again joins forces with Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), Women's March Global, International Service for Human Rights, MENA Rights Group, to reiterate the demand for the definitive release of Loujain al-Hathloul and her right to return to France, on the occasion of her second hearing on March 10th 2021.

Saudi women's rights activist, Loujain al-Hathloul, had her sentence suspended on February 10th after 1001 days in prison. However, the fight is not yet over. Her sentence was only temporarily suspended. She has been barred from leaving Saudi Arabia for five years, is not allowed to speak publicly about her time in prison and cannot publicly celebrate her release. Loujain Hathloul's parents have also been barred from leaving the country, despite the fact that they have not been charged with any crimes. She appeared in court on March 2nd for the first time since her release, to appeal the restrictions put on her and her family.

Before her arrest, Loujain was a peaceful advocate for women's rights and part of a movement that called for an end to the male guardianship system and the right for women to drive. In 2018, she met with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and shared valuable information of her observations on the situation of women's rights in the country. She was arrested later that same year with a group of women's rights activists and was convicted of crimes related to terrorism. In jail, she suffered physical and sexual abuse. The CEDAW, along with UN human rights experts have called for her urgent release since the arrest.

In September 2019, Loujain's sister Lina urged the UN Human Rights Council to hold those who tortured Loujain accountable, including Saud Alqahtani, the former senior advisor to the Royal Court. Loujain herself - backed up with civil society's intensive advocacy, her family's support and the international community including the UN Human Rights Council, UN Special Procedures, and the CEDAW Committee - has bravely spoken out about her torture and ill-treatment. She refused to sign a statement drafted by the Saudi authorities in which she would deny all the torture she has endured, in exchange for her release. Loujain also went on hunger strikes to protest the conditions of her detention after being denied regular access to her family. To date, no one has been held accountable for her torture and ill-treatment.

Before her first hearing, Deputy Jean-Baptiste Moreau, President of the France-Saudi Arabia parliamentary friendship group and Najwa El Haïté, lawyer and town elect of Evry-Courcouronnes, published a [tribune](#) to demand her definitive release and the lift on her travel ban.

During the hearing on March 2nd, the public prosecution appealed to have her suspension cancelled and to increase her sentence. She was asked if she regretted her actions and asked to submit an apology to the judges. Loujain answered that she had not committed any crimes under local or international law and therefore does not have anything to repent for. She was asked about her communication with foreign countries, to which Loujain replied that all her communications with foreign parties were based on the Saudi international laws that the Kingdom has ratified.

The foreign parties that have been labeled in Loujain's conviction as terrorist entities include the British embassy, the UN, international human rights organizations and journalists.

The call to rescind her suspension is extremely concerning, as it means that Loujain al-Hathloul is at risk of being incarcerated again and that the mistreatment she has suffered could continue and even intensify. To date, no one has been held accountable for her torture. Her second hearing takes place on 10 March.

ADHRB, Women's March Global, International Service for Human Rights, MENA Rights Group and deputy Jean-Baptiste Moreau, president of the France-Saudi Arabia parliamentary friendship group, reiterate the international community's call for her permanent, safe and unconditional release. We also demand that the people responsible for her torture and ill treatment is held accountable. Finally, we demand that her travel ban be lifted so that she may, if she wishes, return to France.



Jean-Baptiste Moreau