EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

H.E Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Belgium

Brussels, January 14th 2015

Subject: Public lashing of Saudi human rights activist Mr. Raif Badawi

Dear Ambassador,

I would like to express my deep concern and outrage over the case of the Saudi Arabian activist Raif Badawi, who was publicly flogged on January 9th in front of the al-Jafali mosque in Jeddah. He will now have to undergo the remaining 950 lashes over the coming weeks, as part of the sentence pronounced against him by the Criminal Court in Jeddah on May 7th 2014 and upheld by the Court of Appeal on September 1st - 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes, followed by a 10-year travel ban, a ban on using media outlets, and a fine of one million Saudi Arabian riyals.

In my view, Saudi Arabia is hereby carrying out an act of extreme cruelty, violating the prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment in international law, namely the Convention against Torture, which Saudi Arabia has ratified - as pointed out by the EU HR/VP, Ms. Mogherini, in her statement of the 9th January.

Mr. Badawi is a human rights activist, accused of having insulted Islam and thus solely punished for exercising his right to freedom of expression.
I therefore urge Saudi Arabian authorities to immediately suspend any further corporal punishment of Mr. Badawi and unconditionally release him.

Sincerely,

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament

European Parliament
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