

King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince and Minister of the Interior
His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin
Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
Airport Road
Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Brussels, 7 January 2013

RE: Arrest and detention of human rights lawyer Sheikh Suliaman Al-Rashudi

Your excellencies,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE is deeply worried about the situation of lawyer, former judge and head of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), Sheikh Suliaman Al-Rashudi, who has been arrested and taken to the detention centre at "Naif Academy for Security Sciences". He is one of the nine detainees convicted of alleged involvement in forming a secret organization, attempting to seize power, incitement against the King, financing terrorism, and money laundering. On 22 November 2011 the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh handed out on the nine prominent advocates of reform prison sentences ranged from five to 30 years, with Suliaman Al-Rashudi sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and 15 years' travel ban following release. Although the case is at the appeal stage in the very same court, the Saudi Interior Ministry used the verdict to arrest Sheikh Salman Al-Rashudi and imprison him.

We have also been informed that, the arrest comes hours after the publication of a lecture given by Sheikh Al-Rashudi entitled: "The role of demonstrations and sit-ins in Islamic Law", in which he explained the legality of peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins to claim confiscated rights. Sheikh Al-Rashudi has been arrested several times in the past, including his arrest on 2 February 2007 by officials from the Directorate of General Investigations (DGI) in Jeddah, together with eight other advocates of reform and defence of civil rights who have been named "Reformists of Jeddah". He spent nearly five years in a continued detention during which he was transferred between prisons in Jeddah. On 22 June 2011, Sheikh Al-Rashudi was released on bail.

The CCBE believes that there is a correlation between the abovementioned acts against Sheikh Al-Rashudi and his legitimate activism in defence of human rights. In this context, the CCBE wishes to respectfully remind you that the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and

Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals.

We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (c) which states that:

“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (c) To study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters”

Furthermore, Article 12.2 states that:

“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”.

In view of the above, the CCBE urges your authorities to take effective steps to secure the fulfilment of Saudi Arabia’s obligations under the above mentioned international law instruments, and to guarantee in all circumstances that lawyers in your country are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment..

Yours sincerely,



Evangelos TSOUROULIS

CCBE President