

Question for written answer E-007479/2014
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Fernando Maura Barandiarán (ALDE)

Subject: VP/HR - The case of Raif Badawi in Saudi Arabia

On 1 September 2014, the Court of Appeal in Saudi Arabia upheld the sentence imposed on Raif Badawi on 7 May. Badawi was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and 1 000 lashes, and received a 10-year travel ban, a ban on using media outlets, and a fine of SAR 1 million (about EUR 200 000). The conviction and sentence stemmed from Badawi's co-founding of an online forum aimed at encouraging political and social debate, and the accusation that he had 'insulted Islam'. Now that Badawi's sentence is final, the first set of lashes may be imposed within weeks.

1. Is the VP/HR aware of this case, and if so, what is her position, considering that Saudi Arabia adhered to the Convention against Torture in 1997, which prohibits torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment?
2. What has the VP/HR and/or the European External Action Service (EEAS) done to address this case, and how do they intend to move forward in the future to push for the immediate and unconditional release of Raif Badawi?
3. What action has the VP/HR and/or the EEAS taken to address the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia, as addressed and recommended in the European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2014 on Saudi Arabia¹?

¹ P7_TA(2014)0207.