



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

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*Plenary sitting*

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10.2.2015

B8-0158/2015

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on the case of Mr Raif Badawi, Saudi Arabia  
(2015/2550(RSP))

**Josef Weidenholzer, Victor Boștinăru, Elena Valenciano, Richard Howitt, Ana Gomes, Alessia Maria Mosca, Michela Giuffrida, Kashetu Kyenge, Nikos Androulakis, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Krystyna Łybacka, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Tonino Picula, Goffredo Maria Bettini, Miroslav Poche, Biljana Borzan, Victor Negrescu, Viorica Dăncilă, Marlene Mizzi, Luigi Morgano, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Marc Tarabella, Enrico Gasbarra, Kati Piri, Nicola Caputo, Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță, Miriam Dalli**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

**B8-0158/2015**

**European Parliament resolution on the case of Mr Raif Badawi, Saudi Arabia  
(2015/2550(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Saudi Arabia, notably those concerning human rights and, in particular, the report on Saudi Arabia, its relations with the EU and its role in the Middle East and North Africa of 11 March 2014,
- having regard to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, which Saudi Arabia ratified in 2009,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the trial of Raif Badawi, a Saudi blogger, has begun in July 2012 before the General Court in Jeddah; whereas the General Court sent the case to the Criminal Court in Jeddah, saying it did not have jurisdiction to examine the case because it did not find that Raif Badawi had insulted Islam and therefore an “apostasy” charge did not apply; whereas, however, the General Prosecutor, insisted that Raif Badawi should be tried for “apostasy”;

B. whereas Jeddah’s Criminal Court sentenced Raif Badawi on 7 May 2014 to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a fine of 1 million Saudi Arabian riyals (about US\$266,600); whereas Raif Badawi appealed, but the Court of Appeal upheld the sentence;

C. whereas on 9 January Raif Badawi received the first 50 lashes in public of the 1000-lash sentence; whereas the second set of 50 were expected to take place the following Friday on 16 January, but a doctor examined him and concluded that his wounds had not sufficiently healed and he could not withstand another round of lashes; whereas another anticipated round of public flogging on 30 January was not carried out for unknown reasons;

D. whereas on 6 July 2014, Raif Badawi’s lawyer, prominent human rights defender Waleed Abu al-Khair, was sentenced by the Specialized Criminal Court to 15 years in prison, to be followed by a 15-year travel ban after setting up the human rights organization "Monitor of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia";

E. whereas the cases of Rafi Badawi and Waleed Abu al-Khair are part of a widespread campaign in Saudi Arabia to persecute civil society activists and human rights defenders with complete impunity, using both the courts and extrajudicial means such as the imposition of travel bans;

F. whereas Saudi Arabia routinely imprisons the activists on broad, catch-all charges designed to criminalize peaceful dissent, such as “breaking allegiance with the ruler”, “insulting the judiciary and questioning the integrity of judges” and “setting up an unlicensed organization,” and vague provisions of a 2007 law on cybercrime law;

G. whereas Saudi Arabia continues widespread discrimination against its Shia minority; whereas Saudi courts have sentenced two men to death and five others to long prison terms, all of them members of the Shia minority, after unfair trials and dismissing allegations of torture; whereas authorities charged all seven following protests in 2011 and 2012 in Shia-majority Eastern Province towns that resulted in hundreds of arrests;

H. whereas Saudi Arabia’s discriminatory male guardianship system, ministerial policies and practices forbid women from obtaining a passport, marrying, travelling, or accessing higher education without the approval of a male guardian;

I. whereas police and labor authorities are carrying out a vigorous campaign to arrest and deport thousands of foreign workers found to be violating labor laws. The campaign targets workers who do not have valid residency or work permits, or those found working for an employer other than the person’s legal sponsor;

J. whereas Saudi Arabia **executed** 87 people in 2014 for crimes including rape, murder, armed robbery, and drug trafficking, and it has already **beheaded** at least 10 people in 2015, drawing comparisons with beheadings practiced by the terrorist ISIL/Daesh;

1. Strongly condemns the flogging Raif Badawi as a cruel and shocking act by the Saudi Arabian authorities; calls on the Saudi authorities to put a stop to any further flogging of Raif Badawi, release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression; calls on the Saudi authorities to ensure that his conviction and sentence are quashed;

2. Calls on the Saudi authorities to immediately stop the crackdown on all human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia, release all prisoners of conscience imprisoned solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and take other concrete, visible steps to show the willingness to improve the country’s abysmal rights record, such as, for instance, ending the practice of arresting and detaining suspects for months and sometimes years without judicial review or prosecution;

3. Stresses that the Saudi judicial system suffers from a number of deeply entrenched systemic problems, such as flagrant due process violations, including broadly framed and vaguely formulated criminal charges, denial of access to lawyers at arrest and during the pre-trial detention, making it almost impossible to prepare cases for trial, dismissal without investigation allegations of torture, especially in cases under the jurisdiction of the Specialized Criminal Court, Saudi Arabia’s terrorism tribunal;

4. Urges the Saudi government to stop discrimination against its Shia minority and fully respect its civil and political rights, including their freedom of religion and their economic, social and cultural rights;

5. Urges the Saudi authorities to revoke the male guardianship system and also to eliminate all restrictions on women's human rights, freedom of movement, health, education, marriage, employment opportunities, legal personality and representation in judicial processes, and all forms of discrimination against women in family law and in private and public life;

6. Calls on the Saudi authorities to improve the working conditions and treatment of immigrant workers, with special attention to the situation of women working as domestic helpers, who are at particular risk of sexual violence and who often find themselves in conditions of virtual slavery; calls on the Saudi authorities to stop the violent attacks against migrant workers and to release the thousands who have been arrested and are being kept in makeshift centres, reportedly often without adequate shelter or medical attention;

7. Is concerned that Saudi Arabia's attempts to position itself as a credible ally in the fight against extremism and radicalisation, as embodied by ISIL/Daesh and Al Qaeda, is seriously undermined by the application of brutal punishments such as floggings, lapidation, beheadings and other treatments that amount to ill treatment and torture; calls on Saudi authorities to immediately stop such punishments; urges the King of Saudi Arabia to commit to the promotion and fulfilment of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law and to repeal all practices that are inconsistent with its international law obligations;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the UN Secretary General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, H.M. King Salman Ibn Abdul Aziz, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Secretary-General of the Centre for National Dialogue of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.