

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO SAUDI ARABIA (FIRST BATCH)

URUGUAY

- Uruguay would appreciate to know what specific steps have been taken for the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution in line with the Paris Principles, in accordance with the recommendation made by our country in the last UPR cycle, which was accepted by Saudi Arabia.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- Is the government contemplating changes in the implementation of the counterterrorism law, such that the definitions of “terrorist” and “terrorism” do not include acts of expression, association, or peaceful assembly?
- In light of reports of persons imprisoned for peaceful assembly, association, expression, or religion – including some of whom are reportedly being held incommunicado – what steps is the government taking to ensure defendants’ rights, including access to lawyers and family members, are respected?
- We are encouraged by your government’s efforts to complete implementation of textbook reforms at the secondary level to remove all language that incites violence or discrimination against religious groups. How many textbooks and online publications have been updated and disseminated?
- The kafala system, which requires workers to get written permission from their employers to change jobs or leave the country, makes migrant workers more vulnerable to abuse. What steps is the government taking to reform the kafala system?

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

- Given the recent violent death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, reports of arrests of those critical of government policy, the increased use of the cybercrime law, and reported increasing censorship of the press, can the Government of Saudi Arabia elaborate on their claim in paragraph 74 of the national report that the laws of Saudi Arabia guarantee freedom of opinion and expression in line with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
- How does the government of Saudi Arabia plan to address the remaining legal restrictions on women under the guardianship system, such as the requirement of permission from a guardian to obtain a passport?
- In Saudi Arabia’s national report, paragraph 15 states that the Juveniles Act promulgated by Royal Decree no. 113 codifies the age of majority at 18 in Hijri years. Paragraph 61 states that the maximum penalty that can be imposed on

juveniles is 10 years imprisonment. Will the government of Saudi Arabia commute the death sentences of all those currently on death row for crimes committed when they were juveniles?

- Could the government of Saudi Arabia provide an update on the criminal proceedings against women's rights activists arrested between May and July 2018, including details on the specific charges against them; when they are likely to face trial; and provide guarantees that accredited diplomats will be able to observe these trials?
- How does the Government of Saudi Arabia's criminalisation of the private practice of religions other than Islam, not run contrary to the right to freedom of religion or belief in line with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

SWEDEN

- As previously brought up by the European Union, when will the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia accede to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights?
- What measures will be taken to improve the respect for the freedom of expression and the safety of journalists in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?
- What measures are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia taking to implement the recommendation of CEDAW's 2018 report on Saudi Arabia?

PORTUGAL on behalf of the Group of Friends on NMIRF's

- Could the State-under-review describe its national mechanism or process responsible for coordinating the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations and the monitoring of progress and impact?
- Has the State-under-review established a dedicated 'national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up' (NMIRF) covering UPR recommendations, but also recommendations/observations generated by the UN human rights Treaty Bodies, the Special Procedures and relevant regional mechanisms? If so, could the State-under-review briefly share its experience on creating such mechanism, including challenges faced and lessons learnt, as well as any plans or needs to strengthen the NMIRF in the future?

SWITZERLAND

- **Freedom of expression:** Which measures are planned in order to better protect journalists at the local, national and international levels and to make sure that aggressions against them are investigated promptly, impartially and exhaustively? In

particular, how can Saudi Arabia's authorities guarantee a credible, impartial and fully independent investigation of the disappearance and murder of Jamal Khashoggi?

- **Counter terrorism-law / death penalty/ (Woman) Human rights defenders:** The Saudi Government has presented in October 2017 a new counter-terror law that authorizes the authorities to arrest, investigate and refer individuals to the Specialised Criminal Court (SCC) for terrorism-related crimes, introducing the death penalty for these crimes. Since mid-2018, Saudi prosecutors began pursuing the death penalty against peaceful dissidents on charges related solely to their engagement or political affiliations and many of the human rights defenders in the country have been brought to the SCC. Which measures will Saudi Arabia take to ensure that every person arrested receives a fair trial in accordance with international law as well as to amend the counter-terror law in order to bring it into full conformity with international law and standards?
- **Non-Violent Drug Crimes:** Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman said in an [interview with Time magazine](#) on 05.04.2018 that Saudi Arabia has a plan to decrease the number of executions by considering changing the sentence from death to life in prison, for example for cases of non-violent drug crimes. Up to the present date (22.10.2018), Saudi Arabia has carried out 108 executions, 39 thereof (35%) were for drug offences. Proposal to limit drug executions needs to include improvements to the justice system. How far is Saudi Arabia in the process of reviewing its narcotics legislation with a view to abolish death penalty for drug offences?
- **War in Yemen:** Will Saudi Arabia continue its cooperation with the group of eminent and regional experts mandated by the Human Rights Council? Which other steps is Saudi Arabia ready to undertake in order to hold the persons responsible for airstrikes that were identified as violations of international humanitarian law accountable and bring them to justice in fair trials?

GERMANY

- In the 2nd UPR cycle Saudi Arabia supported a recommendation to adopt an NGO law which should take into account the views of civil society stakeholders and provide an enabling framework for the development of civil society in Saudi Arabia. In 2015 Saudi Arabia approved a NGO law. Why is there no category for human rights NGOs foreseen in this law?
- What are Saudi Arabia's steps towards gender equality particularly to strengthen the participation of women in the economic and business life?
- Will Saudi Arabia take steps to abolish travel restrictions for women that stem from the system of male guardianship?

CANADA

- What is the status of women activists currently in detention, including a list of the charges they face and the dates of their trials?
- What interim steps is Saudi Arabia taking towards easing the requirement for a male guardian's consent to obtain a woman's passport?

BELGIUM

- How many individuals are currently on death row? How many individuals have been sentenced to death and/or executed in the last four and a half years? How many were juvenile at the time of the execution or executed because of crimes committed as a juvenile? How many of those on death row have children and how many children are affected in this way?
- With reference to the recommendation made by Belgium during the second cycle of the UPR regarding the effective implementation of the law on domestic violence, can the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia give an overview of the steps taken to guarantee the effective implementation of the law?
- Does the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia intend to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights? Does the government intend to review its reservations regarding the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women?
- Is the government intending to adapt the Law on Associations and related legislation or substantially amend it to bring it in full conformity with international law and standards and allow the formation of independent human rights organizations?
- What are the steps taken by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to implement the recommendations made by the special rapporteur on human rights and terrorism? Does the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia intend to amend the broad scope of the Terrorism Law as to allow for legitimate public dissent and legitimate political or social activism of any kind, including by human rights defenders and journalists, in line with international human rights standards?
- What steps does the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia undertake to ensure the freedom of the press and the media, in line with its obligations under the ICCPR? How does the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia protect and safeguard the space for the exercise of these and other fundamental rights?