

Brussels, 21 AVR. 2015  
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To the signatories of the letter of 4 March

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your letter 4 March 2015, in which you express your strong concern over the possibility that Mr Raef Badawi be retried on charges of apostasy. As I informed you in my reply to your letter of 21 January 2015, the EU has spared no effort to reach out to Saudi authorities to advocate for the review of Mr Badawi's disproportionate and cruel punishment.

Mr Badawi was first charged with "*violating Islamic values, breaking Sharia law, blasphemy and mocking religious symbols using a website on the internet*" in 2012. I am aware of unconfirmed reports on his retrial and of claims by his relatives that he could be again charged with "*apostasy*" which, if found guilty, could carry a death sentence in Saudi Arabia. In December 2013, Mr Badawi had already been referred to a court for alleged apostasy, but that charge had been later dismissed.

The EU has used the full range of diplomatic instruments to encourage Saudi Arabia to abide by its international Human Rights commitments, and we will continue to do so publicly whenever we feel this would be in the best interest of Mr Badawi. The statement issued through my spokesperson on 9 January 2015, recalling the EU's principled position on this case, is one of many initiatives that we have been taking at EU level. In parallel, our position has been, in close coordination with the EU Member States, passed formally and informally to the Saudi authorities on several occasions, including with the new leadership of the country.

We will continue to advocate in our contact with our Saudi partners that decisive progress is needed in the areas of freedom of expression and freedom of speech, as well as freedom of religion and belief. We hope that the referral of Mr Badawi's case back to a judge for retrial by the Supreme Court will be a first step towards his release.

Let me thank you once again for your continued attention to Mr Badawi's case and for your commitment to upholding the universal character of Human Rights. Rest assured that I will continue to closely follow developments in this case.

Yours sincerely,



Federica Mogherini