



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**Othmar KARAS**

Member of the European Parliament

Ms. Federica Mogherini  
Vice-President of the European Commission/  
High Representative of the Union for  
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
European External Action Service  
Rue de la Loi, 200  
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, March 5, 2015

*Dear Vice-President Mogherini!*

On behalf of the ÖVP delegation in the European Parliament I am writing to you regarding the case of Raif Badawi, Saudi prisoner of conscience, currently held in detention by the Saudi authorities, after having been convicted by the Criminal Court of Jeddah. We remain deeply concerned about the possible developments in his case. We have been informed by multiple sources that Mr. Badawi may be subjected again in the near future to a new trial, this time for apostasy, and that he faces, if found guilty by the Criminal Court, the risk of being convicted to the death penalty.

We, therefore, urge you to employ all your best efforts to call on the authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the release of Raif Badawi, his lawyer Walled Abu Al-Kair who is also imprisoned and of all other prisoners of conscience. Raif Badawi's alleged crime was to use his freedom of expression, which is an international human right that Saudi Arabia is bound to respect.

We understand that Saudi Arabia is deemed an important partner to the European Union, both individually and in the context of EU's relationship with the Gulf Cooperation Council. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that engagement with third countries must be based on the upholding of international law, namely, international human rights law, and Saudi Arabia is no exception to that. The moment has come, especially now with a new Saudi leadership, for the EU to send a clear message to the Saudi authorities demanding that it respects, protects and fulfills international human rights, releases all prisoners of conscience and revoke all institutionalized practices that actively infringe fundamental freedoms in the Kingdom.

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We trust that a public statement from you, as High Representative, will deliver a strong and clear message to the Saudi King as the EU will not tolerate international law violations and abhorrent inhuman practices, such as beatings and torture, from its partners silently. The lack of respect for international human rights must bear consequences for the engagement with the European Union. Indeed, in this respect, it is our own responsibility and credibility that are at stake, for not denouncing human rights violations the EU may be indirectly harming the principle of universality of human rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Othmar Karas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "O" and a long, sweeping tail.

Othmar Karas