

Brussels, 13 AVR. 2015
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Mr Othmar Karas MEP
Rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels

Dear Mr. Karas,

Thank you for your letter 5 March 2015, expressing your strong concern over the possibility of Mr Raef Badawi being retried on charges of apostasy.

The EU has spared no effort to reach out to Saudi authorities and advocate for the review of Mr Badawi's case.

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 tools to encourage Saudi Arabia to abide by its international Human Rights commitment, and we will continue to do it 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 towards the new leadership of the country.

We will continue to advocate in our contact with Saudi partners that progress is needed in the areas of freedom of opinion and expression as well as Freedom of Religion or 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 definitive release.

Let me thank you 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