

The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in the Arabian Peninsula



Annual Report 2009

This report documents serious human rights violations in the
Arabian Peninsula during 2009
Covering events from January - December 2009

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Introduction

The Arabian Peninsula is ruled by an absolute monarchy dominated by the family of Beni Saud who could founded their entity in 1932 with the help of Britain after capturing Riyadh in 1902 from the competitor family of al Rashid .

In 1913 , the late (King) Abdul Aziz Al-Saud could annex Qatif and al-Ahsa through a deal with Britain according to the Anglo-Saudi (Treaty of Darin) which was signed in December 1915 between British government and Abdul Aziz Al-Saud which made the government of the Arabian Peninsula as a dynastic rule in the hands of Beni Saud.

The Saudi regime has not established adequate measures to implement universal human rights standards nor provide enforceable remedies to the alleged victims.

In the Arabian Peninsula , there are no recognized political parties , independent bar associations or national elections .

The fundamental right to freedom of expression is explicitly denied and there is tight control and extensive censorship of the press and other mass media.

People in the Arabian Peninsula continued to be denied civil and political rights.

Independent civil society institutions were nonexistent . There were no laws and regulations to enable human rights organizations, political parties, and other entities peaceful political groups to obtain state authorization to function freely and participate openly in the political process.

The government of Saudi regime prohibits the public religious expression of non-Muslims and the adherents of other minorities who do not follow the officially sanctioned doctrine of Islam .

Shi'a religious beliefs that differed from the state were not tolerated by the government , and their practitioners were detained .

Freedom of expression, association, and assembly were strictly limited in law and practice .

The Saudi regime tightly controls the media. Criticism of the government, the royal family, or the religious hierarchy is liable to a prison sentence.

The Government routinely monitors Internet communications, including e-mail, and blocks access to the critical internet sites and cuts internet connections between local human rights NGOs and the outside world .

The Constitution

There has been no written constitution in the country. The Saudi regime has always rejected the idea of adopting a secular written constitution, arguing that the Holy Koran and the Sunna (tradition) of the Prophet Muhammad serve as the country's constitution.

The country is governed according to a series of royal decrees called them (**The Basic Law of Government**) , which sets out the system of government , and it governs issues not discussed in the Quran, but its authority is subordinate to the monarchy and the religious establishment.

The basic law, is issued directly by the king's office without consultation with other governmental bodies and without any public discussion. The shortcomings are obvious in it and does not set steps towards participatory government and recognition of citizens rights and its restricted materials fall far short of internationally recognized standards in their treatment of civil and political rights . It does not provide citizens the right to change the government and citizens could not exercise this right in practice through free elections .

In addition , there is no remedy in it for the notoriously deficient due process rules in the Saudi penal system.

The Basic Law states that the system of government is a monarchy and among the offspring of Abdel-Aziz Al Saud and gives the reigning monarch unprecedented absolute authority over the appointment and dismissal . The article 5 of the Basic law of government states that :

(a) The system of government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is that of a monarchy.

(b) Rule passes to the sons of the founding King, Abd al-Aziz Bin Abd al-Rahman al-Faysal Al Sa'ud, and to their children's children. The most upright among them is to receive allegiance in accordance with the principles of the Holy Koran and the Tradition of the Venerable Prophet.

The king is the head of the regime and he performs legislative and executive functions. He can introduce new laws, amend existing laws or reinterpret them through a royal order. He can also approve and amends international treaties, agreements and regulations by decree. He approves all decisions of the Council of Ministers.

The article 44 of the Basic law of government states that :

"the king shall be the point of reference for the judicial , the executive and the regulatory authorities."

There are no institutional checks on royal authority. In practice there is no accountability and the king has wide-ranging discretion.

The king is the head of the Council of Ministers. He can veto any decision of the Council of Ministers. He appoints and removes deputy prime ministers, ministers, and other members of the Council of Ministers by royal order. The article 57 (a) of the Basic Law stipulates that :

"the King appoints and relieves deputies of the prime minister and ministers and members of the Council of Ministers by Royal decree."

Although the Basic Law gives authority for the Council of Ministers to take any suitable step to issue a law or regulation as the article 19 of the Ministers Council Law which states that,

" the Council of Ministers will plan the internal, external, financial, economic, educational and defense policies and all the public affairs of the state, and oversee their implementation. It will look into the decrees

of the Consultative council. It will have executive power and it will be the point of reference for financial and administrative affairs in all the ministries and other governmental bodies".

But at last it will require the approval of the King as Prime Minister.

The king is the commander in chief of the armed forces. He appoints officers and revokes their duties .

On October 20, 2006 the Saudi regime formed a committee of princes (known as the Allegiance Institution, includes the sons and grandsons of (King) Abdul Aziz to vote on the eligibility of future kings and crown princes. According to the rules of the committee , it can vote for one of three princes nominated by the king.

Saudi regime lacks a standard legislature. It only has a Consultative Council which consists of 150 members selected by the king , its members serve for four-year terms. The Consultative Council can be restructured and dissolved by the king.

There are no national elections, except the municipal elections which were held in the year 2005 (participation was reserved for male citizens only and the voting age was fixed at 21) to elect the members of 178 municipal councils and the other half appointed by the government .

In those municipal elections , Shiites were twice as likely to vote as Sunnis.

Although the electoral law for municipal elections was formulated in 1977 but has not been put to use until municipal elections were held.

Municipal elections results are difficult to interpret because candidates ran as individuals, not as members of parties.

The women were excluded from participation in those elections and they were not allowed to vote or stand as candidates or run for office.

The Saudi Constitution does not provide for a right to privacy. The government can, with a court order, search homes, vehicles, places of

business and intercept private communications. People living in the kingdom should assume that communications can be seized by the government for evidence in a criminal trial.

Elections

There are no national elections, except the municipal elections which were held in the year 2005 (participation was reserved for male citizens only) to elect the members of 178 municipal councils. The other half will be appointed by the government. , but as they were non-partisan elections, no political parties were allowed.

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Municipal elections results are difficult to interpret because candidates ran as individuals, not as members of parties.

The women were excluded from participation in the municipal elections and they were not allowed to vote or stand as candidates, the justification for their exclusion was the logistical problems related to the lack of photo identification cards for women and the difficulty of staffing separate voting centers for them.

Freedom of speech

The right to freedom of speech is absolute in Saudi Arabia and the right is commonly subject to limitations, such as on "hate speech".

Although the Basic Law of Government provides for freedom of speech and of the press as in article 39 which states that, "Information, publication, and all other media shall employ courteous language and the state's regulations, and they shall contribute to the education of the nation and the bolstering of its unity. All acts that foster sedition or division or harm the state's security and its public relations or detract from man's dignity and rights shall be prohibited. The statutes shall define all that." ; however, the government restricted these rights in practice.

The Saudi government censors all forms of communications for themes deemed to be offensive to the royal family or Wahhabism . This includes all newspapers, magazines, comic books, advertisements, film, internet , and all video or computer software that is sold in the country . This includes people bringing in such material into the country , even if it is for personal use.

Saudi regime also imposes restrictions on some satellite channels, and revokes broadcasting licenses of others which allow freewheeling debates or transgress traditional red lines and domestic press laws .

The Government owns and operates the radio and television companies and most of the newspaper publishing houses. The print media are privately owned but publicly subsidized
Public movie theatres have been unofficially banned.

There are “red lines” the press does not cross, including criticism of the royal family and religious issues .

On 9 June , al-Mabaheth al-`Amma of al-Qatif called the Shi'a writer and the journalist (Naser al-Jarouf) and subjected him to investigation due to an essay published on Rasid website criticized in it the degrading treatment of the Saudi officer (Tarik al-Maghlooth) against the Shi'a citizen (Mustafa al-Faraj).

On 24 August , al-Mabaheth al-`Amma , called "al-Jarouf " again to investigate him on the same case and forced him to sign pledge declaring he would never again write on these cases in future .

In July, the Interior Ministry issued a decree prevented any film festivals in the country and banned permissions for any body to hold such festivals , based on advice
the Grand Mufti Sheik Abdul Aziz al-Asheik .

On 17 July , the Saudi authorities cancelled the Jeddah's summer film festival because of pressure from religious elements in the extreme religious establishment despite the support of the governor " Khaled al-Faisal".

In the same month the music concerts from the Abha tourism festival in the mountainous southwest of the country were banned by the authorities .

On 23 July the authorities of " Buraida Passports Bureau" banned the human rights activist (Mohammad Salih al-Bajadi) , the manager of the website " Human Rights " , to travel abroad due to posting articles criticizing the social and political situations in the country and the practices of "Mutawwa'in" .

On 25 January , the journalists Khalid Suleiman al-Omair, 40 years , and Muhammad Al-Oteibi were arrested in Riyadh due to an attempt to organize a demonstration to protest the war in Gaza . They continue to be held in al-Ha'ir prison .

Khalid Sulaiman al-Omair, was previously in 2005 for six months imprisonment after he appeared on Al-Jazeera television .

On 29 July , al-Mabaheth al-`Amma , arrested the Syrian blogger Ra'fat al-Ghanim, who had signed a petition calling for the release of the journalists Khalid Suleiman Al-Omair and Muhammad Al-Oteibi, who arrested in January.

On 6 December, Saudi authorities prevented the blogger (Ra'ef Badawi) from traveling to Beirut because of his website when he has criticized through it the human rights violations of the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice against citizens.

Ra'ef Badawi was arrested in March 2008 for one day and subjected for severe investigation because of his criticism to the behavior of Mutawwa'in and their human rights violations .

The Saudi government has frequently blocked Internet users in the country from accessing web pages that deal with political issues .

The government also monitors Internet news programs to ensure adherence to the government policies. It blocked access to selected Internet sites that contained information deemed politically sensitive and it also monitors e-mail and Internet chat rooms.

The Security Affairs Commission in the Ministry of Interior has blocked all the websites of Saudi human rights organizations in Saudi Arabia or abroad . As (The Committee for Defense of Human Rights in the Arabian Peninsula (CDHRAP) , Saudi Affairs , Safhat Byanat , Human Rights First Committee , Ya Hussain web site , Rafed Net , Shi'a Net , UK based Islamic Reform Movement (IRM) , The sites of al-Islamic Tajdeed , al-Qala'a , al-Haramain for Islamic Media , Hajar web net , Wadi Najran Net , the U.S.-based Saudi Institute , Saudi Information Agency , al-Shi'I al-Ghaiour Net , al-Hewar al-Motamaden Net .

Freedom of Religion

The Saudi regime's respect for freedom of religion remained poor. The Saudi regime's has no tolerance for religious minorities and their rights to freedom of worship. The government's lack of tolerance is directed against all non-Muslims and non-Wahhabi Muslims .

It does not protect the freedom of religion, despite the Basic law of government stipulates in the article 23 that : " The state protects Islam; it implements its Shari'ah; it orders people to do right and shun evil; it fulfills the duty regarding God's call.", and the Article 8 which states that " Government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on the premise of justice, consultation, and equality in accordance with the Islamic Shari'ah." , but beliefs which are not harmony with the Wahabbi doctrine " the official state religion" are forbidden .

Adherents of other minorities , their community, religious and cultural events are monitored closely by the religious police "al-Mutawwa'in" and the local authorities .

The Saudi border officials confiscate all religious symbols or scripture of other religions at the border including , rosary beads and holy cards. Those who attempt to smuggle in religious artifacts or scripture risk arrest and their possessions confiscated and destroyed .

The Saudi government's arrest and detention of Shiite adherents solely on the basis of their religion is a violation of this law. In addition, some of

these arrests violate Saudi Arabia's obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights , which obligates Saudi regime give all citizens the right to freedom of religion," *Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*" (Article 18)

Sectarian Discrimination

Shiites are the largest minority in the country. They estimates range from fifteen to twenty percent of a total population . They have subjected to a long-standing discrimination .

The ill-treatment of the Shiite minority ranges from employment and education discrimination, and restrictions on travel , to massive arbitrary arrests and detention and ban on the destruction of their religious buildings.

The Saudi regime had launched campaign of intimidation, economic and cultural repression, and terror against Shiites, and a traditional government disregard to their demands for social justice .

The Saudi authorities are very intolerant of any Shi`a activism, and were extremely suspicious of any activity in the Shi`a community.

Shi`a adherents subject to very sever consequences if there are found publicly practicing certain aspects of their religion.

Shiite religious practices are seen by Saudi regime as an ideological deviation, or a betrayal of the strictly conservative version of Sunni Islam enforced by the Government .

Shiites are not permitted to perform their religious rites and ceremonies and act according to their religious education and their religious practices.

The Wahhabi clerics , backed by the state , also claim that Shiite practices are non-Islamic and have been regarded Shiites as non-Muslims , infidels or apostates ; and their worship misguided religious practices .

The government also forbids Shiite clerics from publishing their teachings and prohibits the importation of any Shiite books which related to their beliefs into the country.

Shiites are restricted to celebrate their religious holidays . Their courts have limited jurisdiction over family law matters.

The government also restricted Shiite to visit religious shrines in Iran and Iraq .

Employment Discrimination

Discrimination made on the basis of religion has an effect of impairing equality in employment or occupation.

The Shiites of Arabian Peninsula are discriminated against in employment. The Saudi regime , in particular , practices discrimination against Shiites by excluding them from most government employment.

Shiites are not allowed to serve in the defense, security and diplomatic fields , so , and consistent with this policy, employment opportunities for Shiites are extremely limited.

They are excluded from at least 50 percent of Saudi universities and research institutions.

Shi'a citizens are not afforded equal pay and the same professional opportunities as their Sunni counter parts , even they are able to pursue advanced degrees and professional careers.

Discrimination in Education

The Saudi regime discriminated against Shiites in the system of education. Shi'a students experienced discrimination within the primary and secondary school systems.

The Saudi system of education, however, is still administered in a manner which restricts educational opportunities for Shi'a students and does not provide equal access to universities.

A lot of Shi'a children have no access to education, others who had chances to have access to education , study in schools where they endure bad conditions and daily assaults on their dignity by Wahabi teachers.

There are restrictions on appointment on Shi'a as principals at the schools , supervisors or professors at university .

For example, it was estimated that Shiites comprise 2 percent of professors at a leading university in Al-Ahsa, an area that is at least 50 percent Shiites. Also in Al-Ahsa, it was estimated that there were five Shi'a principals at the several hundred boys' schools and no Shi'a principals at the several hundred girls' schools.

Shi'a teachers were not permitted to teach religion in schools and they with the students , are banned to have holidays during Shi'a holidays .

Some religious education teachers who most of them were Wahabbies , told their students that Shiite practices were un-Islamic and that Shi'a students must follow Sunni traditions to be true Muslims, others told their students that Shiites were not Muslims, but rather unbelievers or [Rafidah \(rejectionists\)](#).

The prejudicial questions on exams and some teachers continued to use anti-Shiite rhetoric, such as calling Shi'a students polytheists.

The facilities for schools in Eastern Province are markedly inferior those provided for other provinces. The Saudi system of education demonstrates its inherent inequality. Shiites are restricted access to education of any type or at any level. , and limited to education of an inferior standard. The Saudi regime does not provide a teaching staff and facilities of the same standard, or afford the opportunity to take the same or equivalent courses of study.

The rate of Shi'a students is little compared to students from other Islamic sects. Among the reasons for this very low percentage is the education system which based on discrimination against Shiites.

The Saudi textbooks containing prejudicial religious statements content disparaging of Shiites and are hostile to them . They are characterizing their faith as a form of heresy and promote violence against them.

Many books retained language that was intolerant of Shiite religious beliefs. They contain teaching materials and statements of intolerance towards Shiite minority , and such statements were made by public officials and teachers, who hold extremist religious views.

The regime does not take measures to remove the references to other religious traditions from some educational curricula.

For example , the Ministry of Education published the book of (Tawhid , Dr. Sheikh Saleh Ibn Fawzan Al-Fawzan the member of the (Committee of Senior Ulema) for the 12th-grade . It propagates an ideology of hate toward Shiites and Sunni Muslims who do not follow Wahhabi doctrine .

Public school students at all levels receive mandatory religious instruction based on the Government's interpretation of Sunni Islam. Shiite teachers are not permitted to teach certain courses in schools, such as history or religion, even in predominantly Shiite areas.

The Saudi regime imposed a ban on establishing Shi`a religious schools. The Government does not recognize several Hawzat (centers of Shiite religious instruction) located in the Eastern Province, recognize certificates of educational attainment for their graduates, or provide their graduates employment, all of which it does for Sunni religious training institutions, it also prevents them to travel abroad to continue their religious studying.

The Government also discriminates against Shi'a in higher education through unofficial restrictions on the number of Shi'a admitted to universities.

Shi`a Mosques and Husseinats

The Saudi Government prohibits Shi`a to build new mosques nor allowed to expand or remodel existing mosques. The Saudi regime also prohibits Shiites from building new Husseinats (religious community halls), where they conduct funeral ceremonies and other religious services. It also refuses to grant permission to build new halls.

The government sometimes demolishes or closes down the existing Husseinats .

Shiite mosques in mixed neighborhoods were required to recite in their mosques , the Sunni call to prayer, which is distinct from their own, during prayer times.

The (Commission to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice) always issues a stern warning to the Shi`a Imams to abide by the " legitimate" call to prayer. The warning promises the violators severe punishment. In addition, although Shiites combine two of the daily five Sunni prayers, Shiite businessmen were often forced to close their shops during all five prayer times, in accordance with Sunni practices.

The Closed Mosques and Husseinats

On 7 January Saudi authorities prevented public march in commemoration of Imam Hussain's during the Shi'a holiday of Ashura in the town of Qadieh in the eastern province city of Qatif .

Saudi authorities ban people to display Hussaini banners and consider the celebration of Ashura Day as un-Islamic.

On 8 January Saudi authorities cut off electric power from the mosque of al-Subtain in Mahdoud district in Ahsa , and the security forces removed all banners and signs fixed on the streets in the occasion of Shi'a holiday of Ashura in the town of Rumaila in Ahsa .

On 9 January, the Saudi authorities closed down the Husseinat of al-Baddy and the memorial gatherings of Albo Zaid and al-Sawwaf in the eastern town of Hufuf in Al-Ahsa , and the funeral ceremony of Sadat al-Ali and a Husseinat in Battaliyah .

Al-Mahbahith al-'Ammah called the supervisors of these Husseinats and the memorial gatherings , questioned them , and forced them to sign pledges declaring they would never again participate in such religious activities in future .

On 15 January the Saudi police attacked a play portraying the whole tragedy of martyrdom of Imam Hussain in Kerbela acted in one streets of Safwa town in Qatif . Police destroyed all decoration of the play and arrested the supervisor of the play (Sayyed Salih al-Sada) .

On 16 January the Saudi authorities closed down the religious hall of al-Qal'a where a play portraying the tragedy of martyrdom of Kerbela , which was attended by a lot of women and children. The police arrested (Sayyed Yousif al-Shabeeb) who is in charge of the hall.

On 5 February , al-Fatimiyah Hussainyet was closed down by security forces and cut off the electric power .

On 15 February , the Hawzat al-Mubaraza a religious school was closed down, affiliated with AL-Qabli Mosque in al-Ahsa, and arrested some of its teachers. This school had been in operation for sixteen years.

On 5 March 2009 , al-Mabaheth al-`Ammah of Al-hsa called the Shi'a citizens (Sayyid Hashim Ali al-Naser , the son of the prominent cleric "Sayyid Ali Naser al-Salman", prayer leader of al-Khobar mosque ; Zohair Hassan Albo Salih and Ahmad al-Rashid) and forced them to sign a pledge to close their mosques under an allegation that they had no permission of construction the mosques and conducting congregational prayers in the only three Shi'a mosques in the town .

The Saudi authorities in June 2008 closed down those mosques and arrested their imams for short time , forced them to sign pledges not open them again or leading prayer in future.

In 23 March al-Khawwaja Hussainyet in al-Kout district of al-Hufouf in al-Ahsa was closed down .

In 24 March al-Zahra Hussainyet in al-Ahsa was closed down which was in existence for twelve years .

On 22 April the Saudi security authorities put new barriers around the graves of four imams of the Ahl ul Bayt in holy Baqi cemetery and surrounded them to prevent visitors from blessing them .

On 20 May , dozens of Fatimi citizens in Thoqba district in al-Khobar city forcibly opened their mosque which is lately closed by the Saudi authorities. They performed prayers in it .

On 25 May the police arrested Abdullah Saleh al-Muhanna, a retired mayor of al-Khober after holding Friday prayers at his home for members of the Shi'a community

On 26 June the Saudi security forces surrounded two Shi'a mosques in Thoqba district an in al- Jiser district in al-Khobar city . They prevented prayers to perform their communal prayers.

In July , the prominent Shi'a cleric "Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Nasir" refused to stop his communal prayers in the only Shia mosque in al-Khobar city , and threatened to perform the communal prayers in the street.

On 5 August , Saudi security forces attacked five popular festivals were prepared for the occasion of the annual celebration of the Imam Mahdi birthday during the Islamic months of Sha'ban in al-Ahsa . Police destroyed all the decoration an banners

In the same day the security forces attacked the town of Beni Ma'n and prevented Shi'a people to hold festivals for the occasion of the annual celebration of the Imam Mahdi birthday and threatened the supervisors of imprisonment .

On 6 August , the Saudi authorities cut off electric power on the only Esmaili mosque (Thuqba) in in Khobar city and forced the Esmaili Shia prayers to perform Friday prayer in intense heat .

The mosque has capacity for 1000 prayers was in existence for seventeen years .

The authorities closed down it with the excuse that the mosque is now situated in the industrial sector and had no official permission of construction .

On 10 August Saudi authorities closed down the mosque Hajj Hussain Al-Rashid adjacent to his house in Baboniyah district in al-Khobar city .

The authorities forced al-Rashid to sign a pledge to close the private mosque .

On 14 August , the security forces and municipalities of Al-Hasa removed all sorts of celebration and festival decorations meant for Imam Al-Mahdi Day of Remembrance .

Security authorities had instructed custodians and supervisors in the village of Bani Ma'n to remove all sorts of fixtures and road decorations meant for the same occasion , otherwise they will be imprisoned.

In October , the authorities ordered all Shia mosques to be closed in the cities of Khobar, Dammam and Khafji and issued orders banning Shias from building mosques outside Najran and religious centres (husseiniyaat) and cemeteries outside Qatif and Al-Hassa.

On 12 October the Saudi authorities closed down the single Shi'a mosque in Dammam and prevented the Shi'a citizens to enter the mosque to hold Friday prayers.

On 1 November , the Saudi security forces arrested Sayyid Yousif Sharaf Al-Hashim for hosting Friday prayer in his house in al-Jiser district in al-Khobar city . Al-Hashim was released after eight days of detention.

On 1 November , the Saudi authorities closed down two Shia Ismaili mosques in Ras Tanura and Abqaiq, in the Eastern Province and ordered Shia citizens from performing Jamaa prayer.

In Jubail the authorities closed down the one Shia mosque.

On 2 December the Saudi authorities closed down two Shia mosques in the Eastern Province . The mosques are in the town of Ras-Tannora and Baqaiq which are used by Shia Ismaili community .

The police prevented the Shia citizens to enter the mosque to hold Friday prayers without given any explanation .

The Events of Al-Baqi and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi

On 20 February hundreds of Shi'a pilgrims accompanied their children from the Eastern Province came to Al-Baqi cemetery adjacent to the Prophet Mohammed's mosque in Al-Madina Al-Munawwara , which houses the graves of many of the Prophet's relatives and companions to commemorate the anniversary of the Prophet's death , an occasion not observed by the Saudi regime.

The pilgrims were angered when some the members of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (CPVPV) made videos of the Shiite female pilgrims, and the dispute boiled over into violence.

The pilgrims clashed with the security forces in reaction to the filming because they considered the filming of women was an invasion of their privacy.

When five male relatives of the women demanded the police turn over the tapes, there was a scuffle and the men were arrested and charged them with causing a disturbance at the cemetery gate. The detainees included (Abdullah al-Matrood , from Safwa town , al-Qatif ; Abdullah al-Drweesh ,

from al-Qatif ; Abdullah al-Mo'men, 15 years , from al-Dammam ; Mortaza al-Abrash , 25 years , from al-Dammam)

The detainees were transported to jail then transferred to the Bureau of Investigation and Prosecution to be conducted .

Another confrontation took place when the religious police also banned female Shiite pilgrims from visiting an area reserved for them outside the cemetery overlooking the graves.

Afterward, hundreds of pilgrims gathered outside the cemetery, demanding the release of the five men . Riot police used batons to disperse the angry Shiite crowd.

The Shiite pilgrims entered into al-Baqee Cemetery and picked up quantities of earth from around the cemetery as a blessing and pray at the graves of the imams, actions goes against the teachings of Wahhabi interpretation of Islam .

On 21 , thousands of pilgrims after performing pilgrimage to Al-Baqee cemetery entered the holy shrine of Prophet Muhammad . On their coming out of the shrine , they saw that more than one hundred personnel of religious police coming towards them with worshippers' sandals, shoes, chairs as well as batons in their hands.

The riot police were heavy-handed in dealing with the pilgrims . The pilgrims tried to go out the shrine but the police beat everyone who tried to step out. Many pilgrims were wounded with knives .

On 22 Stick-wielding members of the morals police backed up by plainclothes policemen sought to disperse the crowds of pilgrims . The security police fired into the air to disperse them . Some pilgrims were injured in a stampede , one of them was the Shi'a youth Zeki Abdulla al-Hassany , 15-year-old , who wounded in the chest and taken later to the city's King Fahd Hospital..

On 23 further clashes between security forces and pilgrims broke out in the streets of the city . Scores of pilgrims fleeing down the roads from the security officials in uniform and plainclothes CPVPV officials .

After the events of Al-Baqee cemetery , a lot of protests were held in various cities of the country with majority of Shiites against attacks of Saudi religious police on Shiite pilgrims.

Police use force to break up the protesters , they attacked them with tear gas and fired live bullets . Some demonstrators were lightly injured when they were beaten with batons and others were arrested and transferred to the Emergency Forces Centre (SEFC) in Dhahran .

The first protest took place on February 20 in the poor Shiite town of Awwamiya in Qatif . Hundreds of Shiite protesters included women are shouting anti-government slogans and demanding more freedoms . They carried banners saying "Down with the government" and spray-painted the slogan on billboards

Some youths threw stones at a police post before officers fired in the air to disperse them .

Arrests after Al-Baqi events

In February al-Mabahith al-‘Amma (General Investigations) arrested the Shi'a citizens (Ali Ahmad Al Rebeh , Hassan Mnsour al-Mezyan and Mohammad Hassan Al Zaid from the Shiite town of Awwamiya in al-Qutaif ; Abdullah al-Matrood from Sihat town ; Abdullah al-Derweesh from al-Qutaif city ; Mortaza al-Arbash , 25 years , and Abdullah al-Mo'men , 15 years , from Dammam ; Hussain Jawad , Ali Al Zeran and Hassan Al Zeran at their homes in al-Qutaif city ; Sajjad Ali al-Sabtti , 15 years , Adnan Mohammad Al Areef , 15 years , Ahmad Ali Sa'eed al-Nemer , 18 years , from Tarout town .

The Judicial System

The Saudi judiciary is not independent and it is subject to influence by the Executive and the high-ranking government officials influence verdicts , though the basic law of the government provides for an independent judiciary , as the article 46 states that:

'The judiciary is an independent authority. There is no control over judges in the dispensation of their judgments except in the case of the Islamic Shari'ah.', but the current policy undermines that independence.

The judiciary is subordinated to the authority of the executive authority which has undue influence on judicial appointments. The King appoints the Minister of Justice the supreme Judicial Council, the Judges of the Court of Appeals , and he has a power to appoint and remove any judge , a power may undermine the independence and credibility of the judicial system.

The role of the Minister of Justice as President of the Supreme Judicial Council further reduces the judiciary's independence.

The judges act in accord with the will of the royal family and come under pressure from senior members of the royal family and other government officials to influence their decisions .

The commoners and the royal family members are not really equal before the judicial system and they receive preferential treatment in all phases of the judicial process and from prosecution authorities who either refrain from filing charges against them or refer them to special tribunals before which it may be easier to get preferential treatment .

The Saudi criminal laws are arbitrary, grossly inconsistent with international human rights standards and fall far short of internationally recognized safeguards and give excessive powers to the arresting authorities. They are so broad and vague and facilitate human rights violations against the prisoners and detainees , and open to wide interpretation by judges who follow the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islamic law as a guideline for criminal sentencing .

The criminal justice system treats from the outset suspects as guilty ; and due to the fail of the criminal justice system to provide safeguards to the detainees , the members of the arresting authorities practice all kinds of torture with the detainees .

The criminal justice system operates behind closed doors though Saudi law requires that trials be public . It can not deliver fair and unbiased decisions and the defense attorneys are not allowed in the court-rooms.

The Saudi judiciary is corrupt , judges are corrupt , they are acting with impunity, they can do what they want because nobody can control them . The Saudi judiciary revealed an unequal application of the law as applied to both Saudi citizens , so , judges have on occasion acceded the power and influence of the royal family and their associates. Moreover, members of the powerful families, are not subject to the same legal constraints as other Saudi.

The Saudi law does not explicitly define which rights citizens may confidently exercise and which conduct is criminal. The lack of codification undermines the existing judicial institutions and increases the potential for abuse.

The Saudi Judicial law does not guarantee a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal. The detainees are treated differently by reason of their religious beliefs or social standing. Those detained who enjoy a high social status are less likely to suffer violations of their human rights.

There are no trials at all for those suspected of political offenses , they were subjected to sham trials to legitimize the arrests. Because the trials of political defendants are secret which their procedures failed to satisfy international fair trial standards and procedures fall short of international standards for fair trial, the defendants are unable to challenge before a higher tribunal the lawfulness of their arrests, imprisonment, or convictions. They are kept in strict incommunicado detention without access to lawyers, family, or friends. There is no judicial review of the duration of detention, or procedures of arrest and search.

Arbitrary Arrest and Detention

The Saudi regime exercises a negative policy towards individuals who suspicious of adopting political attitudes contrary to the regime's policy even they fall among the climate of political reforms.

Although the Law of Criminal Procedure prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention as the article 2 states that , "*No person shall be arrested, searched, detained, or imprisoned except in cases provided by law.*" , and the Basic Law of Government which its article 38 states that : "*Penalties shall be personal and there shall be no crime or penalty except in accordance with the Shari'ah or organizational law. There shall be no punishment except for acts committed subsequent to the coming into force of the organizational law.*" , however, the security forces conducted large-scale arrests and detained many individuals without giving information about the reasons for arrest or charges. The prisoners are held incommunicado for months and not allowed access to family or lawyers.

During the year 2009 the Saudi General Investigations (al-Mabahith al-'Ammah) carried out a lot of arrests included scores of innocent Shi'a citizens from the Eastern Province of the Arabian Peninsula.

January

1- On 1 January , the woman Wafiqa Salih Ahmad al-Hazza' , a 50-year-old housewife of nine children from the town of al-Mobarraz in the Eastern Province, , was arrested on charges of sorcery because of possession Shi'a prayer book. She was released after six months .

2- On 18 January , some Shi'a citizens were arrested because of participation religious activities . Those arrested included , Ibrahim Ahmad al-Makki , 25 years , Abdulhadi Ahmad al-Makki , 22 years , Ja'far Ahmad al-Makki , 28 years , from Dalwa town , and Radhi Aji Hussain al-Ateiya , 60 years , from the town of al-Jern . They were released after two weeks.

3- On 27 January , Kamil 'Abbas al-'Ahmad , 40 years , from the town of Awwamiyya in Qatif was arrested due to participation in the last demonstrations in Awwamiyyah which followed the Events of Al-Baqi and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi .

Al-'Ahmad was released without charge after ten months of imprisonment.

In 1996 , Al-'Ahmad had been detained following the wave of arrests targeting members of the Shi'a community in July 1996.

In September 2001 al-'Ahmad was arrested on charge of burning the car of the (Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice) and released in August 2007.

On 29 December , he was arrested due to his participating in a demonstration to protest the war in Gaza , and released on 18 January 2009.

March

1- On 5 March , Sayyid Hashim Ali Naser al-Salman , the son of the prominent Shi'a cleric Sayyid Ali Naser al-Salman ; Zohair Hassan Albo Salih and Ahmad al-Rashid from al-Khobar city were arrested on the charge of unlicensed construction mosque .

2- On 22 March , Mohammad Hussain al-Abboud , 40 years , and the citizen Salih Mohammad al-Abdullah , 28 years , from Rumaila town of Qatif , were arrested on the accusation of selling special clothing for ceremonies ; Jawad Ali Hussain Abdul Reza , 40 years , from al-Mubarraz town in al-Ahsa, was arrested upon his arrival at the Dammam airport coming from Iran when police border found Shia religious books in his possession . His house was raided and searched by the members of the General Investigations . Among the items the members confiscated were religious books , video tapes and family photographs .

Jawad spent nearly six months without being allowed to be visited by his family .

3- On 29 March , Ali Ma'touk al-Baddi , 43 years , from al-Hufoof town in al-Ahsa , a private employee , was arrested on the charge of reciting funeral poems at the Hussainiyat of the town. He was released after one month .

April

1- On 4 April, the citizen Fadhel Makki al-Manasef from the town of Awwamiyya in Qatif due to participation in a demonstration last March . Al-Manasef was arrested from his work in the Faysaliyah Group in Riyadh after one month of security pursuit .

2- On 26 April , Hussain Salih Hussain al-Mohammad , 25 years , Mohammad Jaber al-Ateiya , 22 years , Salih Mohammad Jasim al-Ateiya , 22 years , from the town of al-Jern in al-Ahsa , were arrested due to participation religious activities .They were released after two weeks .

3- On 28 April , the prominent notable Mohammad Abdullah Ahmad al-Ali , from al-Hufuf in Al-Ahsa , a supervisor of the funeral ceremony of (Majlis al-Ali) which is conducted in his house. Al-Ali was released after one month .

4- On 29 April , Badr al-Ali , 27 year , a private employee from the town of Moneizela in Al-Ahsa .The members of al-Mabahith al-'Amma in one checkpoint stopped al-Ali's car and taken him to unknown location because he suspended a religious Shi'a symbols in his car .

May

1- On 11 May al-Mabahith al-'Amma of Al-Ahsa arrested the Shiite citizen (Hussain Abdullah al-Hababi , 60 years , retire teacher) from the town of Omran in Al-Ahsa on charge of greeting the previous detainee (Shaikh al-Huzari) .
Al-Hababi was released after one week .

2- On 17 May , Abdullah Ahmad Ali al-Ali , 63 years ; Hussain Ali al-Sa'eed , 17 years , student ; Mosa Sadiq al-Sa'eed , 20 years , a collegiate ;

Mohammad Hussain Albo Ali, 17 years , a student ; Ahmad Sami al-Wayel , 21 years , a collegiate from Hufouf town in the eastern city of Al-Ahsa , were arrested on charge of participating in Ashura celebration in the eastern province city of al-Ahsa .They were released after one week .

3- On 18 May , the prominent cleric (Sheikh Ali Hussain al-'Ammar) from the village of Buttalia in Al-Ahsa was arrested under the charge of financing and supporting the Ta'ziyeh of Imam Hussein (consolation) and religious gatherings in other Hussainiyats.

Sheikh al-'Ammar , is a teacher in the Hawza " Shi'a religious seminary " of Al-Ahsa and in charge of a feminine Hawza . He is the supervisor and prayer leader of al- Fatimyyah Hussainyat .

In April 2008 , Sheikh al-'Ammar was called by the General Intelligence and was subjected to prolonged investigation due to sponsoring the feminine Hawza and the Hussainyat of al- Fatimyyah and released in the same day .

In May 2008 , Al-Mabahith Al-'Aamma of Al-Ahsa called Sheikh al-'Ammar again , investigated him and forced him to sign documents declaring he would never again open the feminine Hawza and the Hussainyat in future .

4- On 21 May , Muneer Mohammad Hassan al-Zahir , 43 years , was arrested due to participation in the last demonstrations in Awwamiyyah of Qatif which followed the Events of Al-Baqi and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi .

5- On 25 May , the prominent Shi'a figure (Abdullah Salih al-Mohana) , the former mayor of al-Khobar city in Al-Ahsa was arrested because he refused to sign a pledge to close al-Khobar mosque which is under his supervision for prayers .

June

1- On 9 June , Hussain Isa Ali al-Ahmad from Safwa city was arrested instead of his brother (Nayef Isa Ali al-Ahmad) who has been chased since Al-Baqi events .

His brother (Nasir Isa Ali al-Ahmad) has been arrested previously as a pressure on Hussain al-Ahmad to extradite himself to the authorities .

2- On 30 June, Yaser Ali al-Faraj from the town of Awawamiyah in Al-Qatif was arrested by members of al-Mabaheth al-`amma , the secret police and local police who raided his house without any warrant to search or arrest. They forced themselves into the house, searched it , arrested him , and took him to unknown location .The arresting authorities did not provide a basis for the arrest.

July

1- On 15 July , Zohair Hussain Albo Saleh , 43 years , the son of the notable person (Hussain Albo Saleh the supervisor of al-Thaqba mosque from al-Khober) , an employee in Emirate Airline in Al-Olaya Quarter in Riyadh , was arrested after two months of chase under the charge of supervising of the mosque of al-Thaqba.

2- On 18 July , Mohammad Nimer Baqir al-Nimer, 22 years , the son of the notable leading Shia cleric Sheikh Nimer al Nimer , a student in Jubail University , from al- Awwamiya town of Qatif , was arrested without any charge but used by police as pressure on his father to give himself up to the authorities .

3- On 19 July , Mr. Hejji Hussein Al-Hamad , 50 years , from Turaibeel village , was arrested on the background of participation in religious activities in his village which organize each year .

4- On 20 July , Badr Hussain al-Harbi , 19 years ; Sayyed Mustafa al-Hassan , 26 years ; Nazmi Bo Jbara ; Haidar Abdullah al-Sema'eel ; S'ood al-Haddad from the Rumaila town , were arrested due to participation religious activities . They are still kept in custody.

5- On 31 July , Yousif Mohammad al-Shela' , 28 years ; Sadiq Husain al-Hammad , 36 years ; Sayyied Hussein Naser Muhammad al-Ali , 25 years , Sayyied Hassan Naser Muhammad al-Ali , 39 years , retired employee ; Sayyied Hashim Naser Muhammad al-Ali , 32 years , teacher of secondary

school ; Sayyied Muhammad Naser Muhammad al-Ali , 23 years , university graduate ; Sayyied Ali Naser Muhammad al-Ali , 25 years , collegiate ; Sayyied Abdullah Naser al-Ali , 29 years ; Sayyied Ja'far Naser al-Ali , 27 years , from al-Ahsa city , were arrested solely for the expression of their religious beliefs . They were arrested from their homes . The last one taken from the hospital of al-Ahsa while waiting his wife to give birth. They were released after serving one week of prison sentence .

August

1- On 8 August , Sayyid Mohammad Hussain al-Salman , 27 years , from the town of Rummaila , was arrested for participation in Ashura celebration and posting banners of Imam Hassain during the Islamic month of Mohrram . He was released after 7 days .

2- On 12 August, Sayyid Mohammad Naser al-Ali , from Al-Rumaila town in Al-Ahsa , was arrested due to his participating in the celebration of the last Ashura . He was released after one week .

3- On 30 August , Sayyid Anwar Salman al-Ali , 17 years ; Abdullah Hussain al-Salman , 20 years ; Wa'el Abdul Jaleel al-Shaqaq , 21 years , from Al-Rumaila town in Al-Ahsa . They were arrested due to their participation in the celebration of the last Ashura in the eastern province city of al-Ahsa . The detainees were sentenced to seven days in prison .

September

1- On 18 September the Shi'a citizen Muneer Hashim al-As'ad , a 45-year-old teacher was arrested at his home in Safwa town of Qatif for raising Palestine flag on Al Quds International Day.

Al-As'ad was arrested in 2006 for protesting in front of Ministry of Education branch in Dammam and against his removal of his job.

2- On 28 August , Sayyid 'Oun Hassan Tahir al-Hashim , 22 years , from Al-Rumaila town in Al-Ahsa was arrested due to his participating in Ashura celebration in the city of al-Ahsa . He was sentenced to seven days in prison .

October

1- On 1 October , Sayyid Bassam Ali Al-Ali , 18 years , and Sayyid Hashim Nasser Al-Ali 30 years , from Al-Rumaila town in Al-Ahsa , were arrested on accusations that they participated in the celebration of Ashura . They sentenced to seven days prison terms.

Sayyid Bassam al-Ali was detained on 8 August on accusation of taking part in Ashura march and sentenced a period of one week imprisonment . He is still kept in custody .

2- On 9 October , Sheikh Ali al-Khalifa , 40 years , and Murtaza Hussain al-Harbi , 18 years , from Rumaila town of al-Ahsa , were arrested due to their participation in religious activities .

3- On 20 October , Ali Hussain al-Quraini , 27 years , private employee , and Mohammad al-Hattab , 18 years , a student , from Beni Ma'n town in Al-Ahsa , were arrested on accusations of participation in the occasion of the annual celebration of Imam Mahdi.

4- On 21 October 2007 , Sheikh Tawfiq al-'Ammar was arrested one day under a popular pressure without informing him with the accusation .

5- On 22 October , Abu al-Qasim Jawad al-Mosawi , 18 years , from Al-Hassa was arrested at a police check point in in al-Mubarraz town for possession of Shi'a religious amulets at his car which were considered as sorcery materials . He spent one day in custody .

6- On 23 October , Sayyid Reza Hajji al-Hashim , 16 years , from Beni Ma'n town in Al-Ahsa , was arrested on accusations of possession of Shi'a religious amulets at his car .

Sayyid al-Hashim was sentenced to one month imprisonment and 70 lashes .

7- On 25 October , Sayyid Yousif Sharaf al-Hashim , 40 years , technical supervisor in the professional institute of Dammam from Dammam city , was arrested on accusations of performing communal prayers in his house .

He was released after one week imprisonment .

8- On 26 October , Abdulla al-Mohanna , 20 years , from Al-Tweither town in Al-Hassa was arrested for possession of Shi'a religious amulets. He was released after one week imprisonment .

9- On 26 October , Abdul Mohsen Naser al-Sheikh , a private employee , and Qasim al-Hassawi, a student , from Beni Ma'n town in Al-Ahsa , were arrested on accusations of participation in the occasion of the annual celebration of the Imam Mahdi.

10- On 27 October , Ahmad al-Bajhan , 35 years , from al-Muteirifi town in Al-Ahsa , was arrested on accusations of possession Shi'a religious amulets. He was released after one week imprisonment .

11- On 28 October , Muhammad al-Haji , 30 years , from Battaliyah town in Al-Ahsa , was arrested on accusations of possession Shi'a religious amulets in his car . He was released after one week imprisonment .

November

1- On 11 November , Sayyid Anwar al-Ali , 17 years , and Hussain Yousif al-Harbi , 22 years , from the town of Rumaila in Al-Ahsa were arrested due to participation religious activities in occasion of the annual celebration of Imam Mahdi's birthday during the Islamic month of Sha'ban. They were sentenced to one week imprisonment and transported to the general prison of Al-Ahsa.

2- On 30 November , Yousif Zahiri , from Awwamiyya town of Qatif was arrested under the charge of participating of demonstrations that took place in Eastern Province towns of Qatif , Safwa and Awwamiyya by Shi'a citizens to show solidarity with detainees of the events of Al-Baqi and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi in March.

3- On 30 November, three Shi'a pilgrims from Qatif were detained and brutally beaten by a group of religious police .The detainees were Mosa

Ja'far al-Zaher , a physician from Awwamiyya town , Hussain al-Abdullatif from the town of Om al-Hamam and the youth Abbas al-Janoobi from al-Qatif . The pilgrims were among a group of Shi'a pilgrims from the Eastern province of the Arabian peninsula on their way from Makkah to Madinah after performing the Hajj duty to visit the holy shrines of the Prophet Muhammad and Ahl'ul Bayt in the cemetery of al-Baqi .The detainees were freed after 24 hours .

4- On 31 November , Jaber Ali Eisa al-Obeid , 22 years , a student at the Technical Petroleum Institution from Al-Rumaila town in Al-Ahsa was arrested due to participation religious activities in occasion of the annual celebration of Imam Hassan's birthday during the Islamic month of Ramadhan.

Jaber al-Obeid is still detained in the general prison of Al-Ahsa .

December

1- On 8 December , Hussain Abdul Mohsen al-Hassan , 26 years , a student in al-Shari'a college of al-Ahsa was arrested due to participation in the occasion of the annual celebration of the Imam Mahdi and Imam Hassan birthdays , and organizing the celebration of Gargean during the month of Ramadan .

On 13 October 2008 , al-Hassan was arrested for the organization the annual celebration of Imam Mahdi and Imam Hassan birthdays in his town.

On 14 November , He was arrested for the organization the annual celebration of the birthday of Shi'a Imams in his town .

Al-Hassan was released after seven days imprisonment .

2- On 14 December , the cleric (Sheikh Mohammad albin Hamdha) from the town of Hufoof in Al-Ahsa was arrested under the charge of financing and supporting the anniversary of birthday of Imam al-Mahdi in the last August .

Sheikh albin Hamdha was sentenced a period of one week based on orders from Al-Hasa governor (Badr Bin Mohammad Bin Abdel Aziz Bin Jalawa Al Saud) .

3- On 15 December , Abbas Hussain al-Harbi , 25 years , a student at the Technical Petroleum Institution ; Sayyid Mortaza Ibrahim al-Hashim , 19 years , from the town of Rummaila ; Ahmad al-Sa'eed , from the town of al-Munaezela town in Al-Ahsa ; were arrested for the organization the annual celebration of Imam Hassan birthday. They were released after 15 days .

Hussain Yousif al-Harbi, 22 years , from the town of Rummaila in Al-Ahsa was detained because of hindering traffic during the annual celebration of Imam Hassan's birthday , then he released after one week imprisonment .

Hussain Yousif al-Harbi was detained on 8 August 2009 because of posting banners of Imam Hussain during the Islamic month of Mohrram , and on 11 November , due to participation of the annual celebration of Imam Mahdi and Imam Hassan birthdays during the Islamic months of Ramadan and Sha'ban.

On 20 July 2009 al-Hashim was arrested for posting banners of Imam Hussain during the Islamic month of Mohrram .

Hussain Yousif al-Harbi is still kept in custody.

Prison Conditions

Saudi prisons and jails generally do not meet internationally accepted standards . They are unsanitary, and not air-conditioned.

Overcrowding is one of the conditions in Saudi prisons which is at the root of the generally inhumane treatment meted out to prisoners.

Prisoners generally lacked adequate and clean clothing and they are supplied with only one uniform .

Both the quality and the quantity of the food served in prisons leaves much to be desired and in some prisons the quantity of food is so inadequate that inmates resort to buying food from those cooking.

Inmates slept on a bare floor; in some cases, they were provided with a pad, but no mattress. They had to supply their own blankets. There was little ventilation.

Prisoners sometimes complained of difficulty in obtaining adequate medical treatment.

No special care is provided for psychiatric patients; they are not given medical attention. Warders are suspicious of prisoners wanting to go to hospital, accusing them of just wishing to ask doctors for special diets. Sometimes they only take a patient to hospital when they are near death. Prisoners with health problems have to provide for their own medicine.

Prisoners are not allowed to practice the religion of their choice, where prisoners were harassed by their warders.

Relatives often were unable to obtain access to prisons for visits. Restrictions were placed on visits to prisoners incarcerated for political crimes, limiting the number of visits allowed for each prisoner and the total number of visitors allowed in the prison at one time .

In many prisons , prisoners can be visited only once a month. In other prisons, inmates may write to their relatives or friends only once a month and such letters are read by the prison authorities but they are not allowed to receive letters by mail..

Prisoners are also denied access to lawyers and the courts to challenge the legality of their detention and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them.

The Saudi regime does not allow members of international human rights groups of any type access to prisons, where persons accused of political subversion are detained. There was systematic abuse of political prisoners by guards and the power of arrest and detention , but the authorities neither conduct investigation of abuse nor remove offending guards or punish individual officers who violate regulations.

Torture and cruel treatment

Prisoners in Saudi prisons especially the political prisoners and the critics of the state are subject to gross violations of their rights at the hands of various security forces under the control of the Ministry of Interior. They are held in incommunicado detention and solitary confinement without trial, and routinely tortured during interrogations to extract confessions from them , or to punish them for refusing to repent, or to force them to make undertakings not to criticize the government.

During the interrogation, the suspect is beaten all over his body . Sometimes the torturers hung him upside down and repeatedly beat him with a wooden rod . When suspects refuse to confess , they are intimidated, harassed, and repeatedly tortured.

After the beating , the victim sometimes is unable to walk or stand on his feet and may be taken to the hospital because of the severity of the beatings.

Torture in sometimes resulted in death, disfigurement or permanent disability for prisoners .

The practices of the enforcement authorities against the prisoners violate the articles of the criminal procedure code which the article 2 of it states that an arrested person “*shall not be subjected to any bodily or moral harm*” or to “*any torture or degrading treatment*”. And also violate the article 38 of the Basic Law which states that “ *Penalties shall be personal and there shall be no crime or penalty except in accordance with the Shari'ah or organizational law. There shall be no punishment except for acts committed subsequent to the coming into force of the organizational law.*”

The imposition of flogging sentences by Saudi courts which range from dozens to thousands of lashes are legal punishments inconsistent with Shri'a (Islamic Laws) and considered to be torture under international law.

The common methods of torture in Saudi Prisons

- * Insult the detainee, his faiths, his sacred ideologies and his family members.
- * Telling him bad news in order to exhaust him psychologically.
- * Spitting on the detainee's face.
- * Conducting the interrogation with the detainee while he is naked.
- * Beating by sticks, batons, plastic cords , makeshift whips and electric flex on the soles of feet, hands and other parts of body. The victims suffer bruises, internal bleeding, broken bones, lost teeth, ruptured organs .
- * Pulling out the finger nails by pincers.
- * Clipping the parts of the detainee's body particularly breasts by clippers or put them between tow keys and pressing on them fiercely.
- * Threatening the detainee with sexual assault , his wife or his sister before him .
- * Sleep deprivation and exposure to extremes of heat or cold .
- * Prolonged standing which causes swelling of the legs .
- * Submersion in water .
- * Stubbing out of cigarettes on the body .
- * Deprivation access to a toilets which causes a perforated colon , hemorrhoids and a ruptured bladder .
- * Thrust the shoe into the mouth.
- * Using electric batons and electric chairs.
- * Suspending the detainee upside down with his feet tied to a fan ceiling while it is turning and during winter they turn on air conditioner.
- * Pulling out the facial and chest hair.
- * Dipping the head of the detainee in dirty water or in the toilet .
- * Offering dirty food for him includes insects which causes severe colic.
- * Depriving the detainee from taking a shower during the period of interrogation when he is in the solitary confinement.
- * Burning with a hot iron.
- * Using scissors to tear the skin of body from back .

Forgotten Prisoners (languishing in jail)

On June 25, 1996, a fuel truck loaded with plastic explosives was driven into the parking lot in front of the Khobar Towers which were being used to house U.S. Air Force personnel.

The truck exploded and caused a massive explosion sheared the face off of a building in the housing complex which housed about 100 personnel .

In all , 19 U.S. servicemen and one Saudi were killed and 372 of many nationalities were wounded.

A few weeks later the Saudi regime made a firm decision to blame the bombing on the Saudi Shi'a.

The officials of the Saudi General Investigations (al-Mabahith al-'Amma), told the Americans that they had arrested members of a Shi'a group , subjected them to intensive interrogation and claimed that they had extensive intelligence information linking to the bombing.

But the Americans reveals that al-Mabahith claims were considered suspect and the Saudi officials refused even to reveal the names of the detainees who were alleged to have made the confessions.

The Justice Department said also that the confessions were completely unreliable, and unusable in court, because they had probably been extracted by torture.

One of the Shi'a detainees was (Hani Abd Rahim al-Sayegh) , who had arrived in Canada in August 1996 after having left Saudi Arabia . The Canadian government arrested him and charged him on suspicion based on claims by the Saudi regime that he drove one of the cars used to carry out the bombing.

Al-Sayegh has denied that he took part in the bombing. In addition , all the suspects were detained and being questioned , denied any knowledge of the Khobar bombing.

The Saudi regime has worked to develop the evidence necessary to bring against those responsible for the bombing , but it failed to prove any evidence to their involvement in it.

The Saudi authorities have released all the detainees and still dominated only nine of them who were called Forgotten Prisoners .

The prisoners are still be held without trial in al-Ha'ir prison over thirteen years . They have not been granted access to lawyers , no opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention and have not been allowed to family visit .

The Saudi regime has given no indication that their trial will start . It has also ignored requests for visas submitted by delegates of International human rights organizations who were hoping to meet them , and insisted on accusing them unjustly.

The forgotten Shi'a prisoners are :

- 1- Hani Abdul Rahim al-Saygh , from Sihat town / al-Qatif
- 2- Abdullah Ahmad al-Jarrash , from al-Qala'a town / al-Qatif
- 3- Hussain Mughis, from al-Bahari town / al-Qatif
- 4- Abdul Karim Hussein al-Nemer , from al-Dammam
- 5- Sayyid Mostafa al-Qassab , from al-Qatif / Mayyas town / al-Qatif
- 6- Sayyid Fadel al-Alawi , from al-Qatif / al-Jaroudiyah town / al-Qatif
- 7- Mustafa Ja`far al-Mu'alem ,from al-Qatif / al-Jaroudiyah town / al-Qatif
- 8- Ali al- Marhoun, from al-Qatif / al-Jaroudiyah town / al-Qatif
- 9- Salih Mahdi Ramadhan , from al-Qatif /al-Jaroudiyah town / al-Qatif

The Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice

The Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice was created in 1926, before even the official unification of the whole country six years later. It refers to the Saudi Arabian government bureaucracy employing "religious police" or Mutawwa'in to enforce Sharia Law.

It has approximately 10,000 fierce-looking, bearded members and thousands of volunteers, who patrol all public places and the streets to enforce a strict lifestyle , to ensure that women in public are accompanied by a male relative , that shops close five times a day for prayers and that men go to the mosque and worship . The commission's brigades patrol the cities of the country with their conspicuous cars. They hang around in groups of two or three members, backed up by the regular police.

Mutawwa'in are employed in direct order of the (King) . They have broad and arbitrary discretionary powers of surveillance and entry to property, detention and interrogation of suspects, and, in some places, summary judgment and execution of punishment for perceived violations of Shari'a. They are tasked with enforcing Wahabbi rules as defined in the country . They actively prevent the religious practices of Muslims who do not adhere to the officially sanctioned "Wahhabi" and other religions within Saudi Arabia.

Mutawwa'in should be accompanied by the regular police, but they often patrol without police escort.

They suppress the celebrations of Shi'a holidays , such as the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet and Shi'a Imams' birthdays , and the Shi'a rituals, especially the 'Ashura rituals .

The most serious and widely criticized incident attributed to them occurred on March 11, 2002, when they prevented schoolgirls from escaping a burning school in Mecca, because the girls were not wearing headscarves and head coverings required in public and abayas (black robes), and not accompanied by a male guardian. Fifteen girls died and 50 were injured as a result. Widespread public criticism followed, both internationally and within Saudi Arabia.

They locked the doors of the school from the outside, and barred firemen from entering the school to save the girls, beating some of the girls and civil defense personnel in the process.

The Mutawwa'in announced on June 10, 2007, the creation of a 'department of rules and regulations' to ensure the activities of commission members comply with the law.

Women

Women in (Saudi Arabia) make up more than half the population. Yet nowhere are they safe. Life-threatening abuses are perpetrated against them on the streets, in schools, in the workplace and in institutions .

Although Saudi regime has taken steps to end abuses of women. But for too many women, the promises of the government remain hollow and the abuses they endure every day contradict the commitments made by the government.

The Saudi Government does not make efforts to uphold its international legal commitments while continuing to enforce social segregation.

They faced additional insecurity, through discrimination under the law and in practice, and violence, at the hands of the religious police "al-Mutawwa'in".

Women are prevented from fully exercising their fundamental human rights. They are treated as second-class subject with different legal rights from men and have only severely-restricted freedom of movement.

No woman may travel inside or outside the country without written permission from a male member of her family , and when in public, they may face harassment from religious police if they are not accompanied by a male relative acting as her chaperone.

Women may not marry non-Saudi men without government permission, which is rarely given.

The ban on women driving is still effective .

The women were excluded from participation in the municipal elections and they were not allowed to vote or stand as candidates . They are barred from running for office.

Women in the Arabian Peninsula , too often lack a voice in the social and political sphere and need advocates working on their behalf.

They are not allowed to study any subject they want , fields such as engineering, architecture, and pharmacy remain exclusively male.

They cannot work in most government offices. Even when hired in a private office, they are usually put in a separate room from men.

Women are prevented from accessing government agencies that have not established female sections unless they have a male representative. Despite national regulations to the contrary, some hospitals require a guardian's permission to allow women to be admitted, agree to medical procedures for themselves or their children.

Woman's access to justice is also severely constrained. They continue to have trouble filing a court case or even being heard in court without a legal guardian .

Saudi women still earn less than men, own less property than men, and have less access to education, employment and health care. Pervasive discrimination continues to deny women full political and economic equality with men.

Such discrimination further restricts women's choices, increases their vulnerability to violence and makes it even harder for them to gain redress.

Ratification of International Conventions

The Saudi regime has not become a party to most of the important international human rights instruments now accepted throughout the world. It has claimed that fundamental principles of Islam prohibit its acceptance of many international human rights instruments , but in fact , there is no fundamental contradiction between the teachings of Islam and respect for human rights .

Saudi regime has a lamentable record of formal adoption of the major international human rights agreements and has adopted no other major international agreements relating to human rights.

It has not subscribed to any of the principal covenants or conventions which require formal reporting or accountability for human rights practices. Saudi regime, for example, has not acceded to the two fundamental human rights treaties, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These Covenants are two of the most fundamental human rights instruments in the world.

Saudi regime, has never supported the conventions for freedom of association and collective bargaining and the conventions against racial discrimination, torture, and discrimination against women.

Recommendations

The Saudi Regime should :

- * Issue a permanent constitution , clarifying the basic principles of government and of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled and stating the basic rights of citizens .
- * The investigation of all aspects of the judicial system and areas of competence ; modernizing its laws and taken every necessary step to guarantee independence of the judiciary.
- * Commitment to total equality among all citizens in all aspects of their life, without distinction based on ethnic, tribal, sectarian or social origins.
- * Grant Muslim women their rights to share in numerous fields of public life within the Islamic laws (Shari`a) and to allow them to participate in building society.
- * Reform educational system .
- * Apply justice and equality, rights granted and duties assigned in full equality among all citizens .

- * Ensure the rights of individuals and society , elimination all forms of restriction on people's rights , to ensure the enjoyment of human dignity.
- * Government officials, especially those occupying the highest positions, whose corruption or dereliction are proven must be diligently scrutinized and must be made accountable with no exceptions regardless of any other consideration .
- * Ratify international and regional treaties which seek to strengthen protection against the torture or ill-treatment .
- * Establish effective independent mechanisms to monitor the actions of law enforcement officials so that complaints of torture, ill-treatment and discrimination within the criminal justice system can be properly investigated and appropriate remedies implemented.
- * Act with due diligence to protect children, women, and racial minorities and other groups facing discrimination against violence at the hands of non-state actors .
- * Review cases and releasing those who have been detained or imprisoned on account of their religious belief or practices.
- * Exclude offensive and discriminatory language from textbooks and the school curriculum.
- * Improve the situation of Shiite community and rein in domestic expressions of anti-Shiite hostility .
- * Expand Shiite presence in government institutions, in particular in national and local councils including the Majlis al-Shura and Regional Councils.
- * Lift remaining restrictions on Shiite religious rituals and practices, specifically by allowing construction of mosques and community centers (Husseinat) and the production, printing, and circulation of religious materials within their communities.