

On Saudi Arabia

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Madrid, Spain, on 8-10 of November 2018:

Having regard to:

- the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Arab Charter on Human Rights, ratified by Saudi Arabia in 2009.

Whereas:

- the continuing air attacks by Saudi Arabia that included the use of banned cluster munitions and apparently unlawful strikes that killed civilians;
- the role of Saudi Arabia in supporting barbaric militias in Syria and Iraq; and the Saudi led blockade of Qatar;
- authorities systematically discriminate against women and religious minorities;
- international concerns have repeatedly been raised about access to justice, women's rights, and restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion or belief in the Kingdom;
- in 2017, Saudi Arabia carried out 146 executions, 59 for non-violent drug crimes and the practice of rendition of Saudi political opponents, back to Saudi Arabia, after which they are murdered or 'disappeared'; [1]
- dozens of human rights defenders and activists are serving long prison sentences for criticising authorities or advocating political and rights reforms;
- the *prima facie* evidence that the Washington DC based Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was due to be similarly rendered back to Saudi Arabia by the Saudi government with a planned 'murder on-the-spot' as a backstop, the latter being the brutal outcome on 2nd October 2018.

Believes that:

- the Saudi Arabian monarchy under the *de facto* leadership of Mohammed bin Salman has shown a regrettable disregard for international law and the civilised norms of statehood and diplomacy;
- Saudi support for one side in the civil war in Yemen, the 'legitimate' government of President Hadi, in order to pre-empt Iranian Shia

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influence -is not a sufficiently legitimate basis for continuing its military campaign;

- Saudi Arabia has caused several Arms Trade Treaty signatories to be in breach of Articles 1, 6, 7 and 11 of the Treaty, based on evidence published up to October 2018. [2]

Calls for:

- the UNSC and the EU to condemn the Saudi Arabian government for its disregard for international law and norms;
- the Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Raif Badawi, Liberal International Prize for Freedom winner, as he is considered a prisoner of conscience, detained and sentenced solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- nations which form part of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen or providing logistical and training support, to withdraw their support and promote peace processes instead;
- the VP/HR, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States to conduct a structural dialogue with Saudi Arabia on human rights, fundamental freedoms and the country's troubling role in the region within the framework of EU relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council;
- an international tribunal to investigate the Khashoggi case and similar cases;
- the European Council to reach a common position in order to impose an EU-wide arms embargo on Saudi Arabia and to respect Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and for signatories to the Arms Trade Treaty who have not yet suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia, to do so forthwith.

Sources:

[1] The BBC report of Saudi rendition programmes can be found via: <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/magazine-40926963>

[2] Information on the Arms Trade Treaty comes from the UN via www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/arms-trade-treaty-2. Information of breaches of the Treaty by Saudi Arabia regarding Yemen can be found via the link below. This also sets out data that 31% of bomb targets are non-military and that 68% of arms deployed by Saudi Arabia in Yemen have ended up in possession of groups and institutions other than the Saudi or 'official' Yemen governments. ploughshares.ca/2018/06/war-in-yemen-a-litmus-test-of-the-arms-trade-treaty

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