

January 20, 2015

His Excellency Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir
Ambassador to the United States
Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Your Excellency:

We were pleased to see officials representing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participating in the recent March in Paris to protest the brutal murders committed in the name of Islam at the Hyper Cacher market and the offices of Charlie Hebdo. The March was a demonstration in support of human rights and civil liberties, including the liberty to criticize religion, particular religions, schools of thought within religions, and religious figures and leaders. The Saudi presence was an important statement from the Kingdom about basic rights and liberties enshrined in international covenants and agreements to which the Kingdom has, to its credit, subscribed.

And yet, we note with sorrow that in the Kingdom itself Raif Badawi stands condemned under rules that flagrantly violate these human rights and civil liberties and is being subjected to an unspeakably cruel punishment of 1000 lashes. We call on the government of the Kingdom to put a halt to this grave injustice. We are informed that Mr. Badawi has already endured 50 lashes and will soon be made to endure 50 more. We are deeply alarmed by the prospect of his continued and grave suffering.

Compassion, a virtue honored in Islam as well as in Christianity, Judaism, and other faiths, is defined as “suffering with another.” We are persons of different faiths, yet we are united in a sense of obligation to condemn and resist injustice and to suffer with its victims, if need be. We therefore make the following request. If your government will not remit the punishment of Raif Badawi, we respectfully ask that you permit each of us to take 100 of the lashes that would be given to him. We would rather share in his victimization than stand by and watch him being cruelly tortured. If your government does not see fit to stop this from happening, we are prepared to present ourselves to receive our share of Mr. Badawi’s unjust punishment.

Yours sincerely,



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