

His Majesty King
Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud,

Loujain al-Hathloul, Iman al-Nafjan, Aziza al-Yousef, Amal al-Harbi, Dr. Ruqayyah al-Mharib, Nouf Abdulaziz, Maya'a al-Zahrani, Shadan al-Anezi, Dr. Abir Namankni, Dr. Hatoon al-Fassi and another woman are among a group of Saudi Arabian activists who were detained following a sweeping wave of arrests since May 2018. Many of the women activists brought to trial have campaigned against the long-standing ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia, and for the end of the male guardianship system. On 13 March 2019, several of the women activists were charged with contacting international organizations, including Amnesty International, journalists and other activists.

Up until the first trial session on 13 March, the women activists remained in detention without charge. They were detained incommunicado with no access to their families or lawyers during the first three months of their detention. Several women were subjected to sexual violence and other forms of torture and ill-treatment.

I urge you to drop all charges against all 11 women activists, and to release them immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience, solely detained for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association. I also urge you to allow all those detained to access their lawyers, and to allow independent monitors into the prisons to investigate allegations of torture and other ill-treatment including sexual abuse.

Yours sincerely,