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Waleed Mohammed Al Smanii
Minister of Justice
Postal Code 11472, P.O. Box 7775
Riyadh
Saudi Arabia

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Your Excellency,

**I am deeply concerned about the continued arbitrary detention of fitness influencer and women’s rights activist Manahel al-Otaibi**. In June 2025, Manahel al-Otaibi informed her family that she was scheduled to appear in front of the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) for a new sentencing hearing. The SCC was set up to try terrorism-related crimes under Saudi law. Its judges have presided over grossly unfair trials and handed down decades-long prison sentences as well as the death penalty to people detained over their expression.

On 9 January 2024, the SCC sentenced Manahel al-Otaibi to 11 years in prison for «terrorist offences» after a secret trial where she was found guilty under articles 43 and 44 of the Kingdom’s Law for Combatting Terrorism and its Financing. Manahel al-Otaibi’s family have not had access to her court documents, or the evidence presented against her. The authorities restrict and monitor Manahel al-Otaibi’s communication with her family and therefore she has not been able to inform them of details of court proceedings.

Manahel al-Otaibi was arrested on 16 November 2022 and charged with violating the Anti-Cyber Crime Law for tweeting hashtags in support of women’s rights and posting photos on Snapchat of herself at the mall wearing «immodest» clothing. As well as being subjected to months-long periods of enforced disappearance Manahel al-Otaibi has also been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in al-Malaz Prison. Manahel al-Otaibi suffers from multiple sclerosis, a chronic neurological disorder. In a phone call to her family on 11 May 2025, she reported severe pain in her leg and she said that she had not received adequate medical care.

**I urge you to order the immediate and unconditional release of Manahel al-Otaibi, as she has been convicted solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression. Pending her release, she must be granted immediate access to medical care, and her allegations of torture and other ill-treatment must be impartially investigated.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

Botschaft des Königreichs Saudi-Arabien, Kirchenfeldstrasse 64, 3005 Bern

Fax: 031 351 45 81 / E-Mail: chemb@mofa.gov.sa