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Waleed Mohammed AlSama'ani
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 prolonged and arbitrary detention in solitary confinement of Sheikh Salman Alodah. At 68 years old, he has spent more than seven years in solitary confinement, which amounts to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment under international law and standards, and has lost half his vision and hearing.**

State security officials arrested Sheikh Salman Alodah from his home on 7 September 2017 as part of a wave of arrests of writers, clerics and activists, just a few hours after he posted a tweet praying for «unity of hearts», during a diplomatic stand-off between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. For the first few months of his detention, he was subjected to sleep deprivation and tied to a chair during interrogations. Nearly a year later, in August 2018, he was charged on 37 counts in a secret trial session in front of the counter-terror Specialized Criminal Court (SCC), including for supporting protests in the Arab world and demanding the release of prisoners in the media and on social media. In May 2019, after a second secret trial session, his lawyer informed Sheikh Salman Alodah’s family that the Public Prosecutor had sought the death penalty for him. His last court hearing was in July 2021 and his trial has been pending since.

Sheikh Salman Alodah is a prominent and influential Islamic scholar. Before 2011, he hosted a TV show on a major TV network and then later YouTube, authored dozens of books and had more than 12 million followers on his X (formerly Twitter) account. He advocated prominently for reform including for political and civil rights in Saudi Arabia. His arbitrary detention, unfair trial and potential death sentence, which appear to be politically motivated, are part of Saudi Arabia’s increasing repression of critical voices in recent years.

**The Saudi authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Sheikh Salman Alodah. Until then, they must end his solitary confinement, provide him with adequate medical care and prevent further violations to his fair trial rights.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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