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

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Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,

**I am deeply distressed that Essam Ahmed, an Egyptian fisherman, is at imminent risk of execution and will be put to death unless you quash his conviction death sentence**. Saudi authorities arrested Essam Ahmed in December 2021. He was in the sea somewhere between Saudi Arabia and Egypt. He said he was coerced by a man wielding a gun to carry a package by sea from Egypt. He said he dropped the package in the water and was intercepted by Saudi border guards while still in Egyptian waters.

According to court documents reviewed by Amnesty International, Essam Ahmed was charged with trafficking around 300’000 amphetamine pills, 270 grams of opium, 180 grams of heroin and consumption of prohibited pills and hashish. He was convicted and sentenced under Article 37 of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Control Law (1426 H). The judge imposed a death sentence on him, despite the discretion he had as ata’zir crime to choose another punishment. The use of the death penalty for drug-related offences violates international law and standards.

Essam Ahmed said he was taken to a detention centre on the Saudi shore after his arrest and beaten for three days. He eventually signed a «confession» that he had transported drugs and that he was arrested in Saudi waters. Essam Ahmed has been subjected to a grossly unfair trial. He told the judge that he was threatened at gunpoint in Egypt and that he had been coerced into carrying the package, but his claims were not included in his court documents or raised during the appeal process. His family said that he had no legal representation during his arrest nor investigation. Unfair proceedings render the use of the death penalty arbitrary.

**I urge you not to ratify the death sentence of Essam Ahmed, and to call on the competent authorities to quash their convictions and order a fair retrial without recourse to the death penalty. Saudi Arabia must immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Kopie**

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