

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500



March 27, 2014

Dear Mr. President,

Tomorrow you are meeting King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. Your visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, according to senior White House official Ben Rhodes, affords “an opportunity to invest in one of our most important relationships in the Middle East.”

CSI trusts that any investment in the U.S.-Saudi alliance will be conditional on a fundamental change in the repressive and destabilizing behavior of the Saudi state.

You travel to Riyadh in full knowledge of the Saudi authorities’ brutality, bigotry and intolerance, which have earned their Kingdom the worst possible ranking in Freedom House’s 2013 report on political and civil liberties –an ignoble status shared only by a few other dictatorships and failed states like North Korea and Somalia.

I have enumerated below, as an appendix to this letter, several of the most troubling aspects of the Saudi regime’s behavior, including its religious persecution of non-Muslims and non-conforming Muslims, homophobia, oppression of women, exploitation of labor, and ideological and material promotion of international jihadi terror.

Your administration has recently determined to isolate Russia from the Washington-led “international system and global economy,” to use the words of National Security Advisor Susan Rice, and you are now vigorously campaigning in Europe for support for that policy. But the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – a theocratic police state – subverts the international order through active promotion of a rival global system, based not on Enlightenment values, but on the archaic principles of discriminatory Shariah law, which constitutes the Kingdom’s basic law.

In an era when nuclear terrorism, as you have previously stated, poses “the single most important national security threat,” it is vital for the United States to actively promote human rights, democracy and a peaceful international order in Saudi Arabia, given the Kingdom’s State Department-acknowledged role as a hub for international terrorism. Enormous progress would be made if the United States were to ensure that its Saudi ally raised respect for human rights, democracy and recognition of international law even to Russian standards.

CSI therefore urges you to serve notice that the United States is poised to impose punitive political and economic sanctions against Saudi Arabia, unless the Saudi kingdom conforms to internationally-recognized norms of human rights, ceases to be an ideological and financial backer of international jihad, and pledges non-interference in the affairs of other sovereign states.

Christian Solidarity International (CSI-USA)
870 Hampshire Road, Suite T, Westlake Village, CA 91361
(805) 777 7107 – tel; (805) 777 7508 – fax, csi@csi-usa.org

CSI would expect the President of the United States to make the alliance with Saudi Arabia conditional on its signing, implementing and promoting abroad, especially in other non-signatory Gulf states, such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, the binding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in particular Article 18, which guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This International Covenant, to which 167 states are parties, provides an essential human rights framework for a civilized global political and economic order.

Unless verifiable steps are taken in this direction, the United States and its pro-democracy allies should divest from rather than invest in their relationship with Saudi Arabia.

I have already alluded, Mr. President, to your administration's political and economic sanctions against Russia. CSI trusts that you will make clear to your Saudi hosts that the United States will oppose any punitive measures against Russia and its interests abroad that take the form of support for jihadi and other destabilizing Islamist movements, such as the jihad waged against the Soviet Union during the late Cold War, most visibly in Afghanistan, and the jihadist movement now contributing to massive death and destruction in Syria.

CSI wishes you success in any endeavour you undertake to persuade the authorities in Saudi Arabia to participate in the global political and economic order on the basis of respect for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Respectfully,



Dr. John Eibner
CEO

Saudi Arabia's Repressive, Destabilizing Behavior at Home and Abroad

- Saudi Arabia is a state based on religious apartheid – a state where the practice and symbols of non-Islamic religions, and some Islamic sects, are banned by law – a state where a Christian, Jew or any other “infidel” (kafir) would commit a capital offense should they enter, and thereby defile with their presence, the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina.
- The Saudi Kingdom also practices gender apartheid, with women unable to appear in public without a veil and a male legal guardian. Some Saudi clerics have issued fatwas calling for the death of females who violate these codes.
- According to Saudi law, homosexuality can be punished by death. High school textbooks in Saudi Arabia enumerate the appropriate means of execution: burning them alive, stoning them or throwing them from a high place.

- The Saudi authorities ban trade unions. The International Trade Union Confederation reported last year that “thousands of migrant workers are the victims of torture, work long hours, live in confined conditions and, in general, are deprived of their basic freedoms,” with many of the Kingdom’s 1.5 million domestic servants working in “slavery-like conditions.”
- Saudi Arabia is a major financial and ideological hub of international terrorism. As then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reported in a classified memo in December 2009: “Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qaida, the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba and other terrorist groups... Donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide.”
- Since the former secretary highlighted Saudi Arabia’s connection with international terrorism, the Kingdom has provided extensive financial and military support for jihadi militants in Syria, operating in the context of the U.S.-led effort to overthrow the secular dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad – a war in which over 140,000 people have been killed and millions have been displaced.
- Saudi Arabia’s readiness to use repressive measures outside its own borders was furthermore evident when it militarily invaded neighboring Bahrain to crush peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators in the early days of the “Arab Spring.”