



Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the U.S. Abdullah Al-Saud
Minister of Justice Dr. Walid bin Mohammad bin Saleh Al-Samaani
Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud
King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud

We, the undersigned, would like to express our fundamental opposition to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's prosecution of and death sentence against Ahmad Al-Shamri on charges of apostasy, as [reported](#) by The Independent on 26 April 2017 and other international media outlets.

Such actions against religious minorities are a violation of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

For those adhering to the Islamic faith, we note that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's action against Ahmad Al-Shamri and other Saudi citizens who have chosen to renounce the state's religion in favor of another or none at all is also an apparent violation of verse 2:256 of the Quran, which states that "there shall be no compulsion" in acceptance of Islam. Numerous Muslim scholars from some of the most prestigious Islamic institutions in the world have [interpreted](#) this verse in defense of the right to freedom of religion.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has gone to great lengths to defend its record of security cooperation with the U.S. in the conflict against Daesh, Al Qaeda, and other ideologically aligned terrorist organizations, yet it sends mixed signals on its commitment to countering violent extremism by sentencing its own citizens to be executed merely for exercising their rights to freedom of religion and speech.

In the 21st century, such actions are simply unacceptable.

We call upon the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to pardon Ahmad al-Shamri and others facing legalized persecution for peacefully voicing their beliefs. We further call upon its senior officials to change the kingdom's laws so that no Saudi citizen should have reason to fear government reprisal for exercising their rights to freedom of belief and speech.

We are committed to closely monitor the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's progress on these matters and to persistently lobby our own government to implement diplomatic and economic measures necessary to spur legal reforms within the kingdom until the fundamental civil liberties of Saudi citizens are established firmly in law.

Signed,

American Humanist Association
International Humanist and Ethical Union
Secular Coalition for America
Center for Inquiry