ACAT (Harrow) - prayer case of the month and optional Lent Action *(March 2023)*

**Prayer**

In August 2014 Tarut Island police (Saudi Arabia) arrested 18-year-old **Abdullah Al-Derazi** on the street and beat him severely in relation to his participation in protests against the state's treatment of Shi'a citizens. During detention he was beaten and tortured to extract a ‘confession’, which he was also tricked into signing. During three years of pre-trial detention he was held incommunicado for three months, denied access to a lawyer and was kept in solitary confinement for a period. The torture practised by members of the General Investigations against **Abdullah Al-Derazi** caused burns around the eyes and broken teeth, in addition to pain in the knee and ear, which led to his transfer to the hospital more than once. Following a farcical trial he was sentenced to death in 2018 and the verdict upheld in August 2022. The forced confession provided the only evidence of guilt of the several charges placed against him. These included ‘taking part in protests, damaging property, and participating in the formation of a terrorist cell aimed at destabilizing the country’s internal security’. In such circumstances Saudi prosecutors are known for fabricating and exaggerating criminal charges, some of which were allegedly committed when he was a minor.

In an interview with the American magazine *The Atlantic* on 3 March 2022, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman claimed that Saudi Arabia has ‘eliminated’ the death penalty, except for one category mentioned in the Qur'an, which is related to murder. Between January and June 2022 the state executed 120 people. These included 81 individuals on 12 March 2022 in what is regarded as the largest mass execution since the country’s foundation. More than half of the victims had not been charged with murder and 41 were from the Shi’a minority.

**Action: If you would like to write an appeal for this young man you could copy the letter below to the King of Saudi Arabia or use your own words but the tone should be polite. And send a copy to the Saudi Embassy in London**

*Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud*

*I am writing to you because of my concern that a young man, Abdullah Al-Derazi, is at imminent risk of execution following the Specialized Criminal Court of Appeal’s decision on 8 August 2022 to uphold a death sentence. This had been imposed on him following his involvement in street protests on 27 August 2014 when he was 18 years old, and other alleged offences committed when he was a minor. It was also disturbing to learn that he was kept for a time in solitary confinement, tortured and was tricked into signing a confession which was the only evidence of guilt. I therefore urge you to quash this death sentence and re-try him in procedures fully consistent with fair trial standards, without resort to the death penalty.*

*Thanking you in advance for your immediate attention to this urgent matter.*

*Yours sincerely*

Address: King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud

Office of His Majesty the King

Royal Court, Riyadh

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Twitter: @KingSalman

 The Embassy, Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Al-Saud

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia

30 Charles Street,

Mayfair W1J 5DZ.