

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Ref.: UA SAU 2/2023
(Please use this reference in your reply)

28 April 2023

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 43/14, 51/8, 44/15, 44/5, 43/4, 49/10 and 43/20.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have **received concerning the imminent risk of execution of three persons and long prison convictions of three others, in the context of alleged persecution of members of the Howeitat tribe. Messrs. Shadly Ahmad Mahmoud Abou Taqiqa al-Huwaiti, Ibrahim Salih Ahmad Abou Khalil al-Huwaiti and Atallah Moussa Mohammed al-Huwaiti, have been sentenced to death. Messrs. Abdelnasser Ahmad Mahmoud Abou Taqiqa al-Huwaiti, Mahmoud Ahmad Mahmoud Abou Taqiqa al-Huwaiti and Abdullah Dakhilallah al-Huwaiti, have been handed severe prison sentences. All are convicted for terrorist acts, which are allegedly baseless, and they are rather being punished for merely voicing their opposition to the forced evictions of the Howeitat tribe, including on social media. Some of them have allegedly been subjected to torture and ill-treatment while in custody, including prolonged solitary confinement, for the purpose of extracting confessions. The six, along with other members of the Howeitat tribe, have been resisting evictions from their homes under the NEOM project, part of the Saudi 2030 Vision. NEOM is a project of the Saudi Public Investment Fund, which owns 100% of a closed joint-stock company named Neom. A number of international companies, have been allegedly involved in different stages of the development of the Neom Project. The NEOM project is being implemented allegedly without genuine consultation, free prior and informed**

consent, and access to effective remedies of the Howeitat tribe, whose members have been threatened with evictions from Al Khuraiba, Sharma and Gayal villages.

Reference is made to the previous communication (AL SAU 11/2020) sent by special procedures mandate holders to your Excellency's Government concerning the alleged arbitrary killing of Mr. Abdul Rahim bin Ahmed Mahmoud Al Huwaiti on 13 April 2020, who had been protesting evictions carried out in Al Khuraiba village due to the NEOM project. The Special Rapporteurs raised concern about the forced eviction of the Howeitat tribe, of which they were informed on 1 January 2020, as well as the raiding of the homes of residents opposing the eviction by members of the Saudi Special Forces in March 2020. We are grateful for your Excellency's Government response received dated 6 October 2020 and have taken note of the information contained therein. We would nevertheless have several follow-up questions, in addition to questions related to the information contained below.

According to the information received:

Persecution of Howeitat tribe members resisting the NEOM project

Members of the Howeitat tribe who have resisted their forced eviction and voiced their opposition to the NEOM project have been declared terrorists, accused of posing a threat to national security. Since 2017, at least 47 members of the Howeitat tribe have been arrested and detained, and many of them are being prosecuted under the 2017 Law on Combatting Terrorism Crimes and its Financing. At least 3 persons have been sentenced to death and are facing an imminent threat of execution, while at least 3 others have been handed severe prison sentences. There is allegedly no factual basis for the terrorism charges against them, and instead they have been singled out due to voicing their opposition against the forced evictions of the Howeitat tribe.

The case of Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti

On 24 November 2020, Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti was arrested at his family farm by the General Directorate of Investigations (GID) and the Special Emergency Forces. He was allegedly not presented with an arrest warrant at the time of arrest, nor provided with any information related to the reasons for his arrest. After his arrest, Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti was transferred to the al-Tarrfiyyah prison in al-Qasim and subsequently charged with having the "intention of destabilising the security and stability of the society and the State" as well as "supporting people with a terrorist ideology who seek to disturb public order and endanger its national unit." He was then transferred to the Dhahban prison in Jeddah, which is run by the Saudi Presidency of State Security (SSP).

It is alleged that, while detained, Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti was subjected to acts of torture and ill-treatment as a means of coercing a confession, including beatings, electrocutions, being forced to stand on one leg in the sun all day, sleep deprivation, denial of access to medical care and prolonged solitary confinement. Additionally, following his arrest Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti was

allegedly denied access to legal representation for three months and contact with his family for four months.

On 5 August 2022, Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti was sentenced to death by the Specialised Criminal Court (SCC). The sentence was then upheld by the Specialised Criminal Court of Appeal (SCCA) on 23 January 2023.

The case of Mr. Ibrahim al-Huwaiti

Mr. Ibrahim al-Huwaiti was arrested in early November 2020. He was charged with having the “intention of destabilising the security and stability of the society and the state” as well as using social media to harm national unity.

On 5 August 2022, he was sentenced to death by the SCC. The sentence was upheld by the SCCA on 23 January 2023.

The case of Mr. Atallah al-Huwaiti

On 4 January 2021, following news reports that some Howeitat protesters had been designated as ‘terrorists’ by the authorities, Mr. Atallah al-Huwaiti handed himself over to the *Mabahith* office in Jeddah and was subsequently arrested. He was later transferred to the GID prison in Tabuk and then to al-Tarrfiyyah prison in al-Qasim. While detained, it is reported that he was held in solitary confinement and subjected to torture as a means of coercing him to confess that he, along with other members of the Howeitat tribe, had the “intention of destabilising the security and stability of the society and the State.”

Along with Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti and Mr. Ibrahim al-Huwaiti, Mr. Atallah al-Huwaiti was sentenced to death by the SCC on 5 August 2022, which was then upheld by the SCCA on 23 January 2023.

The case of Mr. Abdelnasser al-Huwaiti

On 18 October 2020, Mr. Abdelnasser al-Huwaiti was arrested by the GID and Special Emergency Forces while en route to Dibba Hospital. Following his arrest, Mr. Abdelnasser al-Huwaiti was transferred to the *Mabahith* prison in Tibuk, where he remained for approximately one month, before being transferred to the SSP-run Dhabhan prison in Jeddah.

It is reported that, while detained, he was held in solitary confinement for four months and subjected to psychological and physical acts of torture allegedly as a means of coercing a confession to the charges brought against him. Such charges include inciting public opinion against the Crown Prince and committing a terrorist offence.

Following an initial hearing in July 2022, and four subsequent hearings, Mr. Abdelnasser al-Huwaiti was sentenced to 27 years imprisonment by the SCC.

The case of Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti

On 24 November 2020, Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti was arrested, alongside Mr. Shadly and Mr. Abdullah al-Huwaiti, while on his family's farm in the al-Khuraiba region. Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti was first taken to the GID prison in Tibuk before being transferred to the SSP-run Dhahban prison in Jeddah. During this time, Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti was allegedly subjected to acts of psychological and physical torture, including being held in solitary confinement for a period of six months.

It is reported that Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti was charged with inciting public opinion and harming national unity in relation to concerns raised regarding the NEOM project and the reported forced eviction of the Howeitat tribe. Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti was also charged with being in possession of a photo of a "dead terrorist" – in this case, his brother, Abdul Rahim al-Huwaiti, who was the subject of the above mentioned earlier communication (AL SAU 11/2020).

Following an initial hearing in July 2021, and four subsequent hearings, Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti was sentenced to 35 years in prison for terrorism-related charges.

The case of Mr. Abdullah al-Huwaiti

Mr. Abdullah al-Huwaiti, a former employee in the municipality of Al Khuraiba, was arrested by SSP agents on 24 November 2020 alongside Mr. Shadly and Mr. Mahmoud al-Huwaiti.

The charges against Mr. Abdullah al-Huwaiti include: (a) defaming the symbols of the State with the intent of destabilising the security of society amounting to an act of terrorism; (b) providing assistance to those who seek to disturb public order and destabilise the security of society and the stability of the state by following their online accounts and providing them with information affecting the security of the homeland through well-known social networking sites; (c) possessing a machine gun without a license; (d) inciting others to carry out terrorist acts; and (e) spreading rumours through his writings and social media.

On 31 January 2022, Mr. Abdullah al-Huwaiti was sentenced by the SCC to 16 years in prison. The sentence was increased to 50 years on appeal in September 2022.

The NEOM Project

NEOM is one of the Saudi 2030 Vision projects described as an accelerator of human progress that will embody the future of innovation in business, liveability and sustainability. It aims at developing a planned 170-km long linear smart city, called The Line, which will be home to 9 million people, in Tabuk Province in northwestern Saudi Arabia, which will be powered by renewable energy sources. NEOM is a project of the Saudi Public Investment Fund, which owns 100% of a closed joint-stock company named Neom. A number of

international companies have been allegedly involved in different stages of the development of the Neom Project, including Aecom, Aedas Limited, Air Products and Chemicals Inc, Bechtel Global Corporation, Boston Consulting Group, Bureau Proberts, China State Construction Engineering Corporation, FCC Construction SA, Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co. Ltd., Keller, Laboratory for Visionary Architecture, McKinsey & Co, Morphosis, Oliver Wyman LLC, Samsung C&T Corporation, Solar Water, Van Berkel en Bos U.N. Studio B.V, and Zaha Hadid Architects.

The acquisition of land for the NEOM Project has threatened to displace an estimated 20,000 members of the Howeitat tribe from the villages of al Khuraiba, Sharma and Gayal, who have lived in the northwest Tabuk region for centuries, without genuine consultation, their free, prior and informed consent, and without effective access to remedies.

During the initial stages of the project, local residents were assured that they would be involved in the development process; however, in January 2020, the residents of al Khuraiba, Sharma and Gayal villages were informed that they must leave their land or face eviction. A large portion of the Howeitat tribe have refused to vacate and as a result have faced various forms of persecution, including destruction of property, interruptions in the provision of electricity, unexplained fires, job relocation, harassment, threats and kidnappings. Nevertheless, they have continued to publicly oppose the evictions through campaigns, petitions and social media broadcasts.

Saudi authorities have allegedly offered financial incentives to government-appointed tribal sheikhs and other community leaders on the condition that they condemn resistance to the NEOM project. During a meeting with the Tabuk emirate, these same officials are said to have been offered between 100,000 (US\$26,653) and 300,000 (US\$79,960) Saudi riyals to organise an event at which they would condemn the actions of Abdul Rahim al-Huwaiti and other protesters.

While some residents are prepared to move, the authorities have rejected their requests to be resettled in nearby villages and have instead offered compensation to those willing to relocate to more remote parts of the country. However, the compensation policy is seemingly inconsistent and has been unequally applied, with some residents reportedly offered 620,000 Saudi riyals (US\$165,000) and others as little as 17,000 Saudi riyals (US\$4,500). Persons that accept any form of compensation are required to sign waivers absolving the government of any charge of forced displacement.

The majority of those displaced have resettled between Tabuk and Duba, yet they remain at risk of further displacement. In July 2022, the residents of Maqna, a coastal village inhabited by members of the Howaitat, Bani Attia and Juhayna tribes, were deported to the cities of Haql and Tabuk. In these larger cities, many have been forced to live in poorer neighbourhoods due to the inadequate compensation received for their expropriation due to the NEOM project.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we express our profound concern about the death sentences handed to Mr. Shadly, Mr. Ibrahim and Mr. Atallah al-Huwaiti as well as the severe prison sentences handed to Mr. Abdelnasser, Mr. Mahmoud and Mr. Abdullah al-Huwaiti. It would appear that they are all being punished simply for the legitimate exercise of their right to freedom of opinion and expression, voicing their protest against the planned forced evictions under the NEOM Project. If the above allegations prove to be accurate, they constitute flagrant violations of article 3 (right to life, liberty and the security of person), article 5 (prohibition of torture and ill-treatment), article 9 (prohibition of arbitrary arrest, detention and exile), and article 19 (freedom of opinion and expression) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). These would correspond to article 5 (right to life), article 8 (prohibition of torture and ill-treatment), article 14 (right to liberty and security of person, and prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention), and article 32 (freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any medium, regardless of geographical boundaries) protected under the Arab Charter on Human Rights (ACHR), acceded to by your Excellency's Government on 15 April 2009. We stress that the right to life constitutes a norm of jus cogens and customary international law from which no derogation is permitted under any circumstances (CCPR/C/GC/36, para. 2).

We note that the sentence of death may only be imposed for the most serious crimes in accordance with the laws in force at the time of commission of the crime and pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court.¹ It was submitted in a report by the mandate on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions that a death sentence can only be imposed in cases where it can be shown that there was an intention to kill which resulted in the loss of life (A/HRC/4/20, para. 53). We stress that the enforcement of any sentence of death in contravention of a State's obligations under international law constitutes an arbitrary execution and is thus unlawful.

We also wish to reiterate our concerns expressed in SAU 12/2020, SAU 1/2022, SAU 5/2922, SAU 7/2022, and SAU 1/2023 regarding the compatibility of the *2017 Law on Combatting Terrorism Crimes and its Financing* with Saudi Arabia's international human rights obligations under the UDHR, the ACHR and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). During the visit to Saudi Arabia in 2017, the former Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism expressed concern about the legislative framework for counter-terrorism, including fair trial provisions, and drew the Government's attention to problems of systematic torture in the country (A/HRC/40/52/Add.2). In this regard, we reiterate that the right to a fair trial is one of the fundamental guarantees of human rights and the rule of law. It comprises several interrelated attributes and is often linked to the enjoyment of other rights, such as the right to life and the prohibition of torture."²

In line with our previous communications, we also reiterate our concern about the overly broad definition of "terrorism" under the Law on Combating Crimes of Terrorism and its Financing susceptible to qualify civil disobedience and critical or opposing views as "terrorist" acts, undermining the "principle of legal certainty" enshrined in article 11 of the UDHR. States must ensure that counter-terrorism

¹ Article 6, ACHR

² [OL SAU 12/2020](#) (17 December 2020).

legislation is limited to criminalizing properly and precisely defined conduct based on the provisions of international counter-terrorism instruments and is strictly guided by the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality.

Noting that Mr. Shadly al-Huwaiti, Mr. Ibrahim al-Huwaiti and Mr. Atallah al Huwaiti have been charged with offences such as “intention of destabilising the security and stability of the society and the State”, “supporting people with a terrorist ideology who seek to disturb public order and endanger its national unit” or “using social media to harm national unity”, which do not appear to have resulted in the loss of life, we remind your Excellency’s Government that the Human Rights Committee has consistently interpreted article 6(2) of the ICCPR to mean that the death penalty can only be imposed for crimes resulting in loss of life (CCPR/C/79/Add.25). Thus, offenses that do not directly and intentionally result in death, such as attempted murder, even if serious, can never serve as a basis for the imposition of the death penalty (CCPR/C/GC/36 para. 35).

We are further alarmed by the reported acts of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to allegedly coerce detainees to confess guilt, in addition to the excessive use of prolonged solitary confinement in what appears to be a method for intimidation and denial of fundamental safeguards, including regular and confidential access to a lawyer of one’s choice, and the attendant right to habeas corpus, in addition to the right to contact one’s family. In this regard, we would like to underline the absolute and non-derogable prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as set forth in articles 1, 2, and 16 of the CAT, acceded to by Saudi Arabia in 1997, which also include an absolute prohibition of the use of statements obtained under torture and other ill-treatment in any legal proceedings (article 15, CAT). We also wish to draw the attention of your Excellency’s government to the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), which include provisions on the responsibility of States regarding health care for detained persons (rules 24-35) as well as discipline and sanctions (rules 36-46). In this context, we wish to reaffirm that solitary confinement should only be used in exceptional cases as a last resort, and for as short a time as possible.³ Prolonged solitary confinement, for a period of isolation lasting more than 15 consecutive days, has been designated as a form of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and/or punishment. The practice is thus entirely prohibited.⁴ We are deeply concerned about the treatment of all six men during their respective detentions. We are further alarmed that the court did not render any of the confessions inadmissible, nor did it instruct a prompt, thorough and independent investigation into the allegations as required by article 12 of the CAT.

We also bring to your Excellency’s Government’s attention the legal and procedural safeguards against torture and ill-treatment including the right to legal counsel and to contact one’s family from the outset of arrest as provided in article 14 of the ICCPR, and interpreted in General Comment No. 32 (2007), where the Human Rights Committee explained that “(...) accused persons must have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of their defence and to communicate with counsel of their own choosing. This provision is an Important element of the guarantee of a fair trial

³ UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), [A/RES/70/175](#) (8 January 2016) Rule 45(1).

⁴ Ibid, Rule 44.

and an application of the principle of equality (...).” Furthermore, according to the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (Body of Principles) “Communication of the detained or imprisoned person with the outside world, and in particular his family . . . shall not be denied for more than a matter of days.” (principle 15). Notwithstanding, the right to immediately inform a person of his choice of an arrest (principle 16.1) and to further correspond with family “detained or imprisoned person shall have the right to be visited by and to correspond with, in particular, members of his family and shall be given adequate opportunity to communicate with the outside world.” (principle 19). In line with article 2 of the Convention against Torture, all States are required to take preventive measures and these would include that every person arrested or detained is immediately able to notify a third party, have access to a lawyer and a physician, and the furnishing of the detainee with information on their rights, available remedies and the reasons for arrest (see report of the former Special Rapporteur on Torture, A/73/207 and Human Rights Council resolution 31/31, paragraphs 4-8).

Further, we wish to stress that, in accordance with the jurisprudence of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, arrest or detention as punishment for the legitimate exercise of rights such as freedom of opinion and expression is arbitrary.⁵

In addition, we wish to express our serious concern about the forced eviction and displacement of the Howeitat residents of Al Khuraiba, Sharma and Gayal villages due to the NEOM project without genuine consultation, free prior and informed consent, effective access to redress and remedies, and adequate compensation. The right to adequate housing enshrined in article 25(1) of the UDHR guarantees the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity, and to possess a degree of security of tenure which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats.⁶ We wish to recall that the former Commission on Human Rights earlier affirmed that the “practice of forced eviction constitutes a gross violation of human rights.” (resolution 1993/77). Similarly, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has declared⁷ that forced evictions are prima facie incompatible with the requirements of the Covenant and can only be justified in the most exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with the relevant principles of international law.⁸ Furthermore, a number of procedural protections apply in relation to forced evictions, including an opportunity for genuine consultation with those affected; adequate and reasonable notice for all affected persons prior to the scheduled date of eviction; and provision of legal remedies.⁹

Finally, we would like to highlight the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which were unanimously endorsed by the Human Rights Council in its resolution (A/HRC/RES/17/31) in 2011. These Guiding Principles are grounded in recognition of:

- a) “States’ existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms;

⁵ See, for example, Opinion No. 5/2021; see also CCPR/C/GC/35, para. 17.

⁶ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 4

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UN Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/RES/1993/77 (10 March 1993) para. 1.

⁹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 7

- b) “The role of business enterprises as specialized organs of society performing specialized functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights; and
- c) “The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached.”

In this connection we note that the following companies domiciled within your territory and/or jurisdiction are potentially involved in the project and subsequent alleged human rights abuses detailed in this letter: Saudi Public Investment Fund, and Neom Company. We note that we have written to these companies to seek their response to these allegations. While these are companies that have been brought to our attention, we note that this is not an exhaustive list and that others domiciled within your territory and/or jurisdiction may also be implicated.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency’s Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned persons, as well as communities affected in the context of the NEOM project, in compliance with international instruments.

We are issuing this appeal in order to safeguard the rights of the above mentioned individuals from irreparable harm and without prejudicing any eventual legal determination.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide detailed information about the judicial proceedings initiated against these persons from the day of their arrest and detention and the factual and legal basis for their arrest, detention and prosecution. Please clarify whether an arrest warrant was provided and whether safeguards were put in place to ensure a fair trial and due process standards, including access to lawyers and how they were effectively implemented with respect to the defendants.
3. Please provide detailed information on the terrorism and national security-related charges against the accused, including information on why Messrs. Shadly al-Huwaiti, Ibrahim al-Huwaiti and Atallah al-Huwaiti were sentenced to death and Messrs. Abdelnasser, Mahmoud and Abdullah al-Huwaiti to lengthy prison sentences. Please explain how these sentences respected the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination.
4. Please provide detailed information on the measures taken by the court to ascertain that evidence presented by the authorities, including any

confessions of guilt, was obtained in full respect of the State's obligations pertaining to the prohibition of torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

5. Please provide detailed information on any investigation, which may have been undertaken, and any results thereof, concerning the allegations of torture and ill-treatment in the above-mentioned cases. If no investigations have been initiated, please explain how this is consistent with Saudi Arabia's international human rights obligations.
6. Please explain how the imposition of the death penalty in the above-mentioned cases is compatible with Saudi Arabia's international obligations.
7. Please provide clarification on the number of people and settlements that the NEOM project envisions displacing, including how many of those belonging to the Howeitat tribe. Please provide information on the number of people who have already been displaced by the NEOM project and on the number of those that still remain living in their homes threatened by evictions and displacement.
8. Please provide information on how your Excellency's Government has ensured that the people threatened with forced evictions and displacement by the NEOM project have been genuinely consulted, have provided their free, prior and informed consent, and have had effective access to remedies.
9. Please provide information on any complaints they may have been lodged with the Board of Grievances, the Human Rights Commission, or any other body, to bring a complaint against their eviction. Have any remedies been granted by either of these bodies?
10. Please indicate what your Excellency's Government is doing to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and how the aforementioned events will inform its implementation.
11. Please indicate which measures, including policies, legislation, regulations, and adjudication your Excellency's Government has put in place to prevent, investigate, punish, and redress human rights abuses related to the activities of business enterprises within its territory and/or jurisdiction.
12. Please indicate if your Excellency's Government has provided any guidance to business enterprises operating in Saudi Arabia on their expected human rights diligence process. Such a process allows companies to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights (as per the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights 17-21) and it helps to ensure that human rights defenders can operate in a safe and enabling environment, free from restrictions and attacks.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. If we do so, the press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government's to clarify the issue/s in question.

We would appreciate receiving a response within 60 days. Past this delay, this communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#). They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

We would like to inform your Excellency's Government that having transmitted an urgent appeal to the Government, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention may also transmit the case through its regular procedure in order to render an opinion on whether the deprivation of liberty was arbitrary or not. The present communication in no way prejudices any opinion the Working Group may render. The Government is required to respond separately to the allegation letter and the regular procedure.

Please be informed that a letter on this subject matter has been also sent to those business enterprises that are involved in the Neom project, including Aecom, Aedas Limited, Air Products and Chemicals Inc, Bechtel Global Corporation, Boston Consulting Group, Bureau Proberts, China State Construction Engineering Corporation, FCC Construction SA, Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co. Ltd., Keller, Laboratory for Visionary Architecture, McKinsey & Co, Morphosis, Neom Company, Oliver Wyman LLC, Samsung C&T Corporation, the Saudi Public Investment Fund, Solar Water, Van Berkel en Bos U.N. Studio B.V, and Zaha Hadid Architects, as well as to the home-States of all involved companies Australia, China, Germany, The Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal
Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context

Mathew Gillett
Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Pichamon Yeophantong
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

Morris Tidball-Binz
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Irene Khan
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion
and expression

Fionnuala Ní Aoláin
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental
freedoms while countering terrorism

Alice Jill Edwards
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or
punishment