



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office



**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon
Minister of State (Middle East,
North Africa, South Asia and The
UN)**

**Prime Minister's Special
Representative on Preventing
Sexual Violence in Conflict**

King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Tel: 0207 008 5000

**Email:
fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk**

www.gov.uk/fcdo

Professor Neve Gordon
Vice President, BRISMES

By Email: office@brismes.org

Our ref: MC2023/02232

24 February 2023

Dear Professor Gordon,

Thank you for your correspondence of 2 February to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of the BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom, about Saudi Arabia. I am replying as the Minister of State for the Middle East, responsible for Human Rights.

Saudi Arabia remains a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) human rights priority country, particularly because of the continued use of the death penalty and restrictions on freedom of expression.

The United Kingdom strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. Saudi Arabia is well aware of the UK's opposition to the use of the death penalty.

We regularly raise our concerns about the use of the death penalty, including individual cases, with the Saudi authorities using a range of Ministerial and diplomatic channels, including our Ambassador and the Embassy in Riyadh. Most recently, I raised my concerns about human rights and the death penalty during my visit to the Kingdom on 15 February, on 21 December 2022 with the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, and on 13 December 2022 with the Saudi Vice-Foreign Minister.

We continue to monitor individual cases of human rights concerns, and raise these cases with the Saudi authorities where appropriate. No aspect of our relationship with Saudi Arabia prevents us from speaking frankly about human rights. We will continue to raise concerns with the Saudi authorities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "pp L. Great", with a horizontal line underneath.

LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON

Minister of State

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict