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## **After Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Salman Acknowledges Death Sentence for Saudi Activist... Is a Reversal on the Horizon?**

In a recent television interview, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince expressed regret over the capital punishment verdict against Saudi activist Mohammed bin Nasser Al-Ghamdi, who was sentenced for his political dissent on social media. The Crown Prince mentioned efforts to amend what he termed 'bad' laws but clarified that he could not meddle in judicial decisions, as it would be 'contrary to the principles of legal sovereignty.'

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK ([AOHR UK](#)) criticised the legal proceedings, stating that basing trials on laws deemed 'defective' by the nation's executive leader is a mockery of justice and endangers lives. AOHR UK highlighted that many dissidents are tried under such laws, serving lengthy prison terms, with some even facing execution.

In the interview, the Crown Prince revealed plans to overhaul thousands of existing laws but cited a lack of sufficient legal experts in the 'Cabinet' as a hindrance. AOHR UK called this reasoning absurd and a fabricated excuse to perpetuate unjust rulings against opposition figures, effectively sending a chilling message that dissent could be a death sentence.

AOHR UK pointed out that the laws under which Al-Ghamdi is being tried were enacted in 2017, after the Crown Prince assumed power. It emphasised that these new laws are the most repressive to date and that the judicial body prosecuting Al-Ghamdi reports directly to the king and has [a history of suppressing dissent](#).

AOHR UK also gave weight to statements by Saeed Al-Ghamdi, the brother of the condemned activist who resides outside of Saudi Arabia. He claimed that the sentence



against his brother targets him personally, following the failure of Saudi investigators to lure him back to the Kingdom. AOHR UK noted that detaining family members abroad to exert pressure is a longstanding tactic used by Saudi authorities.

AOHR UK urged international pressure on the Saudi regime, particularly from countries planning significant deals with Saudi Arabia, to revoke the death sentences against Al-Ghamdi and other dissidents. It also called for an improvement in the overall human rights situation, which has seen a marked decline since the Crown Prince took power.

AOHR UK appealed to global media outlets and human rights bodies to focus on the Saudi regime's abuses, which urgently require reform. It called for an end to arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, media censorship, and for the release of political prisoners."

**Arab Organisation for Human Rights in UK**