



Kungl. Vetenskapsakademien har till uppgift att främja vetenskaperna och stärka deras inflytande i samhället.
The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has as its aim to promote the sciences and strengthen their influence in society.

Stockholm 28 April 2020

Elisabeth Rachlew /ch

His Majesty King Salman
bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
c/o His Excellency Abdulaziz Al Zaid,
Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
in Stockholm, Sweden
Sköldungagatan 5
Box 26073
100 41 Stockholm
Sverige

Your Majesty,

We, the joint Human Rights Committee of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, the Swedish Academy and the Young Academy of Sweden, write respectfully to express our most urgent concern regarding the health and well-being of Dr. Mohammad Fahad Muflih al-Qahtani, an imprisoned Saudi professor of economics who is serving a 10-year sentence for his peaceful exercise of rights protected by international law.

Given that he has been held in a detention facility for many years under difficult conditions, he is particularly vulnerable to serious consequences in case of a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) infection. We understand that, while several hundred detainees in Saudi Arabia have been released in recent weeks, Dr. al-Qahtani remains held in al-Ha'ir Prison.

The World Health Organization and United Nations human rights experts have called on governments to take immediate steps to address prison overcrowding, including the priority release of prisoners who have been detained for offenses not recognized under international law. In light of this urgent situation, we respectfully request your help in ensuring Dr. al-Qahtani's release from prison on humanitarian grounds without delay. Such assistance would be widely welcomed throughout the international scientific community.

We thank you, Your Majesty, for your attention to this important matter. These are dire and challenging times and we send our best wishes to you, Your Majesty, and the people of Saudi Arabia.

Sincerely yours,

Elisabeth Rachlew

Professor, Chairman of the Human Rights Committee

Copy:

Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Stockholm, Sweden
Embassy of Sweden in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia