

Eid Letter to the Embassies Around the World

As end of the Ramadhan and Eid approaches, Shia Rights Watch sent Happy Eid letters to embassies in Washington DC inviting countries around the world to keep minorities and their rights in mind. This NGO called for more protection for Shia population around the world and highlighted the importance of peacekeeping as an international effort.

Read the letter bellow:

Dear Honorable Ambassador....

Shia Rights Watch congratulates you on the auspicious occasion of Eid al- Fitr. Eid marks the end of Ramadhan but the start of a new year, with Muslims empowered and recharged in values and faith.

The Muslim world congregates in unison on this day as a display of solidarity against intolerance and injustice. Let this day serve as a reminder that we are all one global community, either brothers in blood or sisters in humanity.

As a Human Rights NGO, Shia Rights Watch, whose primary goal is maintaining and promoting peace in the world, invites you to take steps towards ending minority and Shia rights violations. Shia Muslims remain the largest minority population in most Islamic nation yet most affected by the attack of extremism.

Your protection of this minority allows for stabilization and promotion of diversity and religious expression further strengthens peace endeavors and limits the growth of extremism.

Shia Rights Watch offers its full support and services in accommodating an environment of fertile communication amongst your leadership and constituents.

We wish you the utmost prosperity on this Eid.

Sincerely,

Shia Rights Watch

June 2017

SRW's Letter to the G7 Leaders- Addressing Arm Sale and Peace Building Plans

Respected leaders and members of the G7,

I am writing to you on behalf of Shia Rights Watch, a not-for-profit research entity and advocacy group headquartered in Washington D.C. U.S.A. Shia Rights Watch holds a 501(c) status, as well as a Special Consultation Status (ECOSOC) with the United Nations.

With conflicts such that of opposing regional hegemonies, tensions run high in the Eastern hemisphere. As harbors of democracy, the responsibility of establishing world peace is in the hands of governances like yours. Your actions are accepted as the epitome of the democratic free world. Thus, we write to you inquiring of your next steps in the establishment of peace endeavors in the Middle East and North Africa, specifically in relation to arms sales your nation has.

Arms deals by Western nations, although create revenue, have extreme repercussions on the rest of the world. With the 43rd annual Group of 7 meeting, we encourage you to take the following into account.

Arms sales to nations such that of Saudi Arabia fuels sectarian strife within the region.

Sales of arms to Saudi Arabia, in addition to increasing religious based conflicts, augments already existing targeting of minority groups through the promotion of radicalism and extremist education. For years, Saudi Arabia has been promoting the discriminatory ideals of Wahhabism. One such minority group is that of Shia Muslims. Saudi Arabia elicits violence upon this group as means of pressuring Iran based on a falsified association of these two entities.

Both domestically and on foreign grounds does Saudi Arabia target Shia Muslims

in addition to other minorities. Whether it be the siege of Awamiya or the funding of terror organizations and schools worldwide, arms sold to Saudi Arabia are used to incite terror.

As we understand the economic benefit of arms sales, we invite you to prioritize your humanitarian values as well. In addition, we encourage international collaborations that would increase peaceful coexistence and promote the rights of minorities all over the world.

Sincerely

Shia Rights Watch

SRW's Ramadan Letter to all Embassies in USA

Dear Ambassador,

This Ramadan, Shia Rights Watch invites you to join the thousands if not millions of Shia Muslim in your nation by renewing your commitment to promoting unity among the masses.

We ask that you be mindful of your Muslim constituents in this month as they hold fasts. Ramadan holds within itself the spirit of devotion to reconciliation for self and community. Muslims use this month as an opportunity to build united front against extremism and hate by promoting love and commitment.

This year SRW encourages establishing mutual understanding and brotherhood among not only Muslims but constituents of all faiths. Let us join as one global community with the same rights and authority for self-care and communal advancement.

Together with your help, we can take the necessary steps to establish the building blocks of a year of prosperous peace. Join us in creating a resolution by which all minority populations especially that of the Shia population are treated as equals in the eye of the law and even social constructs such that targeting a group is no longer feasible economically, politically, or socially. Join us in using the essence of justice and charity, both prominent principles for this holy month, in educating not only ourselves, but others in basic human rights and encourage their implementation in our surroundings.

We entrust this message of peace to you in hopes that your actions and words will acts as advocates of peace in both your home nation and the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Shia Rights Watch

Letter to Embassies for Muharram 2016: “Make Brotherhood and Non-Violence your New Year’s Resolutions”

As Muharram is approaching, Shia Rights Watch writes to embassies to ask for protection of Shia Muslims during their Ashura gatherings. Muharram is the first month of Islamic year when many celebrate New Year and many others postpone their celebrations in order to commemorate the death of a peacekeeper, Husain.

The letter is as follows:

Dear Honorable Ambassador,

On the occasion of the Hijra New Year, it's our honor to extend to you our greetings and sincere wishes. We at Shia Rights Watch hope for this year to be prosperous for you and the people of your country.

As you are celebrating the New Year, Shia Muslims in your community are commemorating the death of a man who stood for justice and the rights of others, Husain. Husain ibn Ali is the Prophet Muhammad's grandson. During this important time, it is important to model the spirit of acceptance and respect by taking actions to prevent any violations and hatred towards this minority. During past years, Shia minority faced forms of violation and pressure during the month of Muharram, and it would add to the sincerity of the government to protect Shia Muslims this year, so they perform their rituals under the safety provided by their government.

We encourage you to make respect, brotherhood and non-violence part of your New Year's resolutions.

At SRW we believe that respect and protection of religious freedom are the keys to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. We call upon all governments to respect the rights of their citizens and protect their lives and property. Please keep in mind that Muharram rituals are not the political movement, but rather religious and spiritual gathering that advocate for peace and brotherhood.

Sincerely,

Mustafa Akhwand

Director of SRW

[SRW's "Thank you" Statement to](#)

[Father Emmanuel Yousaf Mani](#)

Shia Rights Watch, June 15th, 2016 SRW would like to issue an official thank you to Father Emmanuel Yousaf Mani, the National Director of the Pakistani Catholic Bishop's National Commission for Justice and Peace, for his statements regarding religious freedom for Shia Muslims. According to UCA news, Mani stated that the Pakistani government "must take notice of Shia killings" and that "Nobody has the right to force their beliefs upon others." Father Emmanuel also urged leaders to speak out and say Pakistan "is meant for all sects." Shia Rights Watch stands with his sentiments and desires a Pakistan with religious freedom not only for its Shia Muslims but for Christians as well.

The Shia community currently makes up 20 percent of the Muslim community in Pakistan and should be allowed to peacefully practice their religion. Shia Rights Watch reaffirms Mr. Emmanuel Yousaf Mani's statement that "The state must protect all religious minorities."

Sincerely,

[Letter to President Obama to advocate for human rights in his meeting with leaders of Gulf Cooperation Council in Saudi Arabia](#)

Letter to President Obama to advocate for human rights in his

meeting with leaders of Gulf Cooperation Council in Saudi Arabia

*Mr. Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500*

Dear President Obama;

On behalf of the Shia Rights Watch (SRW), we respectfully urge you to use your upcoming meeting with the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh on April 21, 2016 to emphasize on the importance of improvement on human rights in mentioned countries.

As you are aware, Gulf leaders use the national security as a mean to oppress pro-democracy activists, minorities, journalist and human rights defenders. Saudi Arabia's Terrorism Law Template, for example, defines terrorist as a person who "insults the reputation, of the state or its position". Based on this definition anyone who critiques the corruption or violation carried by the government is punished as terrorist. As the result human rights defenders face judicial harassment and other reprisals for their domestic human rights advocacy, engagement with UN human rights mechanisms, or engagement with the international human rights community. Also, similar law enabled all six Gulf states to harass, detain, put on trial, and imprison political activists and human rights defenders.

Beside human rights defenders, minority groups, such as Shia Muslims, face serious threat by their governments in Gulf area. Destruction of historical Shia sites and imprisonment of Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia, deportation of this minority from Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, and ongoing Shia oppression including minor imprisonment in Bahrain, targeted killings in Syria and Yemen are only some examples of the human rights violations in GCC countries.

Compared to other GCC counties Saudi Arabia as the most human rights violations. Execution of the most influential Shia cleric, Sheikh Nimr al-Nime, sentencing his nephew, Ali Nimr, beheading of at least 151 people in 2015 leaving their children and women unprotected, ongoing support of terrorists, extreme ban on Shia religious practices and, are issues that we urge you to keep in mind when visiting this country.

We urge you to advocate for the freedom of the prisoners who are detained because of expressing their religion, rights or opinion.

As American citizens and human rights defenders, we hope to see more freedom of religion and expression in Gulf countries after your meeting on April 21, 2016.

You putting human rights at the heart of your agenda at your meeting with the leaders of the GCC will send powerful message to all leaders and presents our American values.

Sincerely
Mustafa Akhwand
Director of Shia Rights Watch

Letter to President Francois Hollande

President Francois Hollande

Palais de L'Élysée

55 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré

75008 Paris, France

Dear President Hollande,

We at Shia Rights Watch are writing you to urge you to use your attendance at the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting to address human rights abuses committed by the Saudi government. Your attendance at this meeting marks a significant moment in France's relations with the Gulf. The growing security and economic cooperation between your country and the GCC is making France a major player in the Middle East. With this comes responsibility and Shia Rights Watch hopes that you use this influence to serve as a voice for the millions of people whose

lives are affected by the Human Rights abuses committed by the Saudi government.

The Saudi- led Operation Decisive Storm and Operation Restore Hope have created a humanitarian crisis within Yemen. Saudi airstrikes have killed hundreds of civilians and have left millions without food and electricity. A Saudi blockade of Yemen's ports, and subsequent attacks on vehicles delivering aid have stopped the delivery of essential goods to those who need them most in Yemen.

In addition to Saudi Arabia's foreign involvement, domestically, Saudi Arabia has displayed repressive actions against its own citizens. Shia Muslims in Saudi's eastern province have been systematically denied adequate social services and has faced widespread employment discrimination. Attempts by Shia who are affected by this to speak up are met with violence by Saudi security forces. Sheikh Nimr, a prominent peaceful advocate of Saudi's Shia population, was arrested and sentenced to death under unsubstantiated charges of inciting violence. A country with such a long list of human rights abuses cannot be an effective partner in either security or economic matters.

Your attendance at this GCC meeting is of enormous importance, but it is how you use your attendance that will make the greatest difference. Your voice can be yet another voice that supports the status quo, or your voice can aid those who have been rendered helpless through years of continued violence and discrimination. Shia Rights Watch urges you to choose the latter and we hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Shia Rights Watch

The Honorable Mr. Serdar Kılıç

No: 903

Date: September 11, 2014

The Honorable Mr. Serdar Kılıç

Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey

2525 Massachusetts Ave NW,

Washington, DC 20008

Dear Honorable Ambassador Kılıç,

We here at Shia Rights Watch are writing to you today to draw your attention to the Shia rights violations taking place in Turkey. The Shia population worldwide has fallen victim to sectarian discrimination and repression by governments and armed groups. With the rise of the extremist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the security problem of the Shia Muslims has become worse in the region. We would like to inform you that there have been three Shia mosque attacks since June 2014 in different regions of Istanbul and would like to ask your cooperation with regards to protecting the Shia Muslim population of Turkey.

On June 9, 2014 a Ja'fari mosque, Allahu Ekber Ehlibeyt, in Esenyurt district of Istanbul was set to fire. On July 9, 2014 Muhammediye mosque in Esenyurt was attacked by strangers who are thought to be the members of ISIS. The Imam, Hamza Aydin, stated that 10 days prior to the attack, he was verbally threatened and his congregation was accused of "worshipping to the stones and crying to the shrines." Despite the fact that Aydin informed the police about the threat, he said the police failed to take precautions against any further jeopardy. The library section of the mosque was set on fire 10 days after the verbal threats against. The two attackers were reported to say "we will not allow you to recite the ezan here in this mosque" during their attack. On September 3, 2014 the under-construction Imam Ali mosque was attacked by a group of 20-30 people who shouted that they did not want a Shia mosque in their neighborhood.

Shia Rights Watch sees these actions as a violation of Article 2 and Article 18 of Declaration of Human Rights. These attacks are not only violations of religious and identity freedom, but a threat to the unity of Turkish people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, as well. As ISIS is the major threat to the freedom of the minority groups, including the Shia people in the region, we, as Shia Rights Watch, kindly ask the Turkish Embassy of Washington, DC to work with us on the issue of protecting the rights of the Turkish Shias.

With Respect,

Mustafa Akhwand

Director of Shia Rights Watch

President Obama: Violations in Saudi Arabia

Human Rights Violations in Saudi Arabia

No: 899

Date: March 21, 2014

Mr. Barack Obama,
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama;

On behalf of the Shia Rights Watch (SRW), we respectfully urge you to use your upcoming meeting to press Saudi Arabia's King, King Abdullah, to do more to protect the human rights of every Saudi, including the right to religious freedom regardless of religion or sect.

As you know, Arabia implements the most restricted laws against religious minorities, with the frequency and scope human rights violations increasing and therefore threatening people's safety and freedom, particularly the majority Shia Muslims population, as well as its smallest religious minority communities, including Christians.

Saudi Shia Muslims have always been treated as second class citizen without fair access to higher education and employment. They cannot practice their religion and honor their rituals even in their own private properties without the fear of the authority: As an example there is not a single Shia Islamic center or mosque in Riyadh despite its Shia population. Shia Muslims' most historical mosques and graveyard such as Al- Baqi Cemetery have been destroyed and Shia are not allowed to visit the remains of such historical sites. Moreover Shia who visit this country for Hajj rituals face discrimination and degradation in different levels by the kingdom forces and their prayer books and holy stones are disposed at the airports. Clerics such as Sheikh Dr. Ali Al-Rubaie,

who are employed by the kingdom, issue hatred statements against this population and even suggested demanding tribute (religious tax) from Shia in the kingdom.

In your meeting with King Abdullah, we hope that you will stress to him the vital importance of human dignity and having respect and tolerance towards all people and also discussing the importance of implementing freedom of religion for all its lawful citizens. We also hope that you will press him to stop founding and providing safe haven to terrorist groups. Finally, we hope that you will discuss the need for the protection of minority rights and freedom for all.

We hope you agree that discussing the problems of sectarian tensions, violence, and human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia with King Abdulla is essential. Without addressing these concerns, religious freedom in Arabia will continue to erode and the country will not have the peaceful, democratic future that its people deserve and the United States seeks to encourage.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely

Mustafa Akhwand

Director of Shia Rights Watch

[Condemning Terrorist Attack on French](#)

Number: 910

Date: January 7, 2015

The Embassy of France
4101 Reservoir Road Northwest,
Washington, DC 20007

We at Shia Rights Watch are deeply saddened by murderous acts of the three gunmen at the Charlie Hebdo office in Paris today. The murder of the 12 people and the wounding of 11 others is an act of terror that has no place in the world we live in. Our prayers are with the people and families of those affected by this shooting.

The content of Charlie Hebdo may not be popular in religious communities but disdain need not have violent manifestations. All people must respect freedom of expression and taking the lives of innocent people is not permitted in any religion.

We at Shia Rights Watch condemn the actions taken by these terrorists. Unfortunately terrorism is something the international community has witnessed a great deal of over the past year. In fact, more Shia Muslims were killed last year in terror attacks than any other demographic group.

Just as violent attacks against Shia communities around the world have not quelled their peaceful calls for justice, the attacks committed today will not spell the end of Charlie Hebdo. We all want to live in a world safe from harm in which we can express ourselves in the greatest extent possible, and we need to honor this tragedy by making sure we live up to our expectations. We thank you for your service to the people of France and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Mustafa Akhwand

Director of Shia Rights Watch