SAUDI SHIA MUSLIM
Victims of sectarian isolationism

Saudi Arabia Report 2012
Saudi Shia Muslim
Victims of Sectarian Isolationism

www.shiarightwatch.org
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Established in 2011, Shia Rights Watch (SRW) is the world’s first independent organization dedicated to define and protect the rights of Shia Muslims around the world. SRW is a non-governmental, not-for-profit research entity and advocacy group headquartered in Washington D.C., U.S.A. Shia Rights Watch aims to draw the international attention where Shia rights are violated; the aim is to give a voice to the oppressed and hold oppressors accountable for their crimes. S.R.W. achieves its objectives through strategic investigations supported by targeted advocacy in order to bring about informed action.

**Vision**
Freedom of religion for all

Shia Rights Watch envisions the world with peace for all humans, regardless of their religion, gender, race and origin. There should be regulations in every country to support every religion. We believe Shia Muslim as religion should be recognized in every country and any discrimination should be brought to light. God has given us all the freedom of religion and the rights to live in peace.

**Mission**
No Shia above the law and no Shia Below the law

Shia Rights Watch is dedicated to protect the rights of Shia Muslims worldwide. We investigate violations against Shia communities in order to raise awareness against injustice. We promote the change through research and publications. Our reports and articles are submitted to the governments and international organizations, and we continually monitor media outlets to ensure coverage of Shia rights violations. Shia Rights Watch stands for victims of prejudice, and supports activism in order to prevent discrimination, support political freedom, and protect people from inhumane conduct. We enlist the local public and international communities to support the cause of human rights for all.

**The Purpose of SRW**

Shia Muslims face constant oppression throughout the world solely based on their faith. In some countries, Shia Muslims have been the target of repeated persecution for centuries as evidenced in the well-documented expansion of extremism of the Wahhabi movement. We believe the underrepresented Shia Muslim population need a human rights organization that highlights the violations against them, while giving their call for help a louder voice.

**Staff Organization**

The organization began with the collaborative efforts of volunteers with a common interest in advocating international human rights. The momentum created by the increasing number of volunteer and activism allowed for a formal development of the foundation of Shia Rights Watch. Currently the organization has more than 100 active members working in various locations worldwide. The responsibilities of members range from gathering news and information to publishing reports and articles in order to advocate change. We are proud of the religiously and ethnically diverse group of activists who are working together towards a common goal.
Methodology of SRW

We believe that information is the most valuable resource in the investigative process. From the organization’s inception, we have focused on gathering information through various media: interviewing witnesses, family members of the victims and victims themselves; on-site collection of resources; analyzing reports from various national and international organizations; meeting with non-governmental and religious organizations, leaders, and journalists; and creating information networks in a wide range of social sectors.

Based on the information collected from the above sources, different types of human rights violation have been identified. These violations include but are certainly not limited to:

- Violation of right of living;
- Arbitrary arrest, unfair trial, and illegal detention;
- Psychical & psychological abuse: torture, rape, and sexual assault;
- Illegal confiscation of private property;
- Demolition of Religious centres;
- Employment discrimination;
- Education discrimination;

Reports, Publications, and Distribution

Whether it is terrorist bombings of sacred shrines, torture and unjust detention of people, discriminative legislation or intimidation of school children for their sectarian beliefs, Shia have been victimized in most the world. In countries where the press is tightly controlled, most of these cases go unnoticed. Shia Rights Watch tells the stories of injustices and atrocities in order to give a voice to the marginalized Shia victims.

Journalists investigating topics regarding the Middle East will benefit from SRW’s focus on the Shia communities since they are crucially important sectors in Middle Eastern society. For instance, in order to fully examine the ongoing atrocities committed against protesters of the Arab spring, it is necessary to know about the embedded Shia struggle. In areas where Shia have been formerly discriminated against more subtly, the Arab Spring opened a door for more blunt persecution. Cases reported in other parts of the world, such as in South Asia, describe violence and intimidation which reflect fluctuating trends in sectarian hostilities, fueled by various political issues, including terrorism. SRW’s aim is to be able to report the crimes affecting Shia in every part of the globe.

SRW has investigators on the forefront who communicate directly with the victims and monitor multilingual news media outlets. SRW networks with national committees, international human rights organizations, as well as religious scholars of Shia communities. SRW’s members comprise of people with diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds united to defend the of human rights. This international network provides invaluable information to commentators and journalists of the media who are seeking to explore the impact of events on the Shia communities worldwide.
Chapter 1
Background

Saudi Arabia is one of the most powerful monarchies in the world. This country was founded by Abdul-Aziz bin Saud and is being ruled by the Al Saud family. Saudi Arabia is the largest state in Western Asia by land area, and the second largest in the Arab world, after Algeria. The population of the country is approximately 28.5 million, including 5.8 million foreigners. This country is the world's second largest oil reserves and is the world's second largest oil exporter. The kingdom is an absolute monarchy and that results in many violations to human rights to the point that concerns many human rights organizations. Saudi is the only Arab nation where national elections have never taken place (some discriminatory elections took place where women could not vote). The citizens have no say in the government; they lack the freedom of expression, religion, thought and press.

Men treat women as their property. Therefore they do not have any legal or social rights. Also the government treats all citizens as its property with almost no right to involve in decision making. The country belongs to the Al Saud family, who dominate the political and social system, also evident in the country name.

Islamic practice in Saudi Arabia generally is limited to those that reflects the government’s interpretation of Islam which is Wahhabi. This school of thought was originally interpreted by Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab, an 18th century Arab religious leader. Outside Saudi Arabia, this branch of Islam is often referred to as "Wahhabi".

Citizen daily activities are controlled by Saudi kings, which violates basic human rights; nonetheless, the situation is far worse for those who do not believe in the Wahhabi school of thought. From a theological perspective, relations between the Shia and the Wahhabi Sunnis are inherently strained because the Wahhabis consider the rituals of the Shia (including Ismaillis) to be the epitome of shirk (polytheism; literally "association"). Therefore Shia and Ismaillis minorities are treated as second class citizen and do not have any legal rights.

2 ) http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148843.htm
History and Background of Shia in Arabia

The Shia Muslims are the largest minority group in Saudi Arabia, between 15 and 20 percent of the total population.¹ They live in the Eastern province of the country in which they constitute majority of the population. Most Shia in the Eastern province live in the urban areas, such as Al-Qatif and Hasa. However there are Shia living in Medina, Riyadh, Najran and other cities. Saudi Shia share other Saudis' ethnic Arab background and Arabic language, but they have distinct religious beliefs from the majority Wahhabi.²

Saudi Shia belong to the sect of the Twelvers, the same sect to which the Shia of Iran, Iraq and Bahrain belong. The Twelvers believe that the leadership of the Muslim community rightfully belongs to the descendants of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, through Ali’s son Hussain. There are twelve such rightful rulers, known as imams.

The second large Shia group of Saudi are Ismailis. Saudi Arabia's Ismailis are estimated to number up to one million, mostly living in the southwestern Najran province, a remote area which was the House of Saud's last territorial conquest, in 1934. Ismailis had been living in Najran for over a millennium; they were one of many strands of belief that existed in early Islam.³ The Ismaili community is a subset of the country's Muslim Shia minority. Discrimination against Ismailis is also part of a pattern of discrimination against the wider Shia community.

From the fourteenth century until early in the twentieth, Shia in the Arabian Peninsula fell under virtually continuous foreign domination. With the exception of three quarters of a century of Portuguese presence in the sixteenth century, this typically meant rule by foreign Sunnis.⁴ Even so, Shia maintained a strong presence religiously in Saudi Arabia despite rulers and the majority being Sunni. Clerics and followers kept alive important religious institutions, such as mosques and Shia Islamic centers, ⁵ until the advent of Saudi rule, Shia observed annual rituals such as the public mourning processions in honor of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (Ashura). Similarly, until the mid-twentieth century those pursuing religious learning studied in local hawzas (centers of learning) overseen by senior clerics and funded by the local khums (religious tithe). ⁶ Ties also were retained to Shia communities abroad, as students and aspiring clerics regularly

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¹ There is no reliable figures for minorities. According to a 2004 government census, Saudi Arabia’s total population was 22,670,000, including 16,529,302 citizens. The 10 to 15 percent figure refers to “Twelvers”, who are the majority of Shiites and believe that the twelfth Imam, their supreme spiritual guide on earth and direct descendant of the prophet, went into occultation in the ninth century. For a brief description of the origins of the dispute between Shiites and Sunnis, see Crisis Group Middle East/ North Africa Report N°37, Understanding Islamism, 2 March 2005, pp. 18-19.


³ http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/09/22/ismailis-najran

⁴ Juan Cole, Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture

⁵ Husseiniyyas originally were built to observe Ashura, the date when Imam Hussein was martyred. In Saudi Arabia their role evolved over time, serving as centers for social, cultural and religious activities

⁶ The oasis of al-Hasa now maintains the hawza al-‘ilmiyah; a new hawza opened in Qatif in 1996 and recently moved to a new building. A community leader told Crisis Group that, “although officials know about it, they are being passive about it”. Crisis Group e-mail correspondence, 25 August 2005.
travelled to Iraq to complete religious training. Underscoring the historical connection to that country, Qatif’s hawza was known as little Najaf until the 1940s. ¹

After the 1940s, Saudi rulers severely constrained Shia religious observance and practice. Restrictions included injunctions against publicly broadcasting calls to prayer, a ban on publishing and distributing religious texts, limits on mosque construction, the destruction of shrines, the dismantling of centers of religious learning, and even persecution of those observing Shia rituals, including Ashura and grave visitation. The net effect, beginning with the founding of modern Saudi Arabia and accelerating with the building of the state, was to weaken Shia institutions seriously.

From Saudi Arabia’s establishment in 1932, its minority Shia population has been subject to discrimination and sectarian incitement. While resisting calls from tribal warriors to suppress Shia violently, the Kingdom from the outset pacified and marginalized them. Shia, both twelvers and Ismailis, remain unrepresented in official positions. Jobs in the police and military are rare and promotion prospects there rarer still. Shia continue to face obstacles to the free and open observance of their faith.

Current Situation of Shia in Saudi

Shia in Saudi Arabia are currently subject to a plethora of political, cultural, educational and economic discriminatory policies. They are sharply restricted against political organizing, do not have a right to free expression, face employment discrimination in both the public and private sectors, and are restricted from equal access to the Saudi police/military or education system. Members of the Shia minority are also the objects of officially sanctioned religious discrimination. Government has rarely given Saudi Shia any reason to feel part of the state. There are several factors influencing the government’s treatment of the Shia: Wahhabi ideology and the presence of the Shia in the sensitive oil region are among most important factors. ²

Shia Rights Watch has conducted an investigation in recent months regarding the situation of Saudi Shia. The investigation reveals that Shia face many sectarian discriminations in this country. Saudi authorities have carried out a series of detentions of members of the Shia community. Some of the reasons for arbitrary arrests and detention include: the recitation of religious materials in private homes; congregating outside Shia community centers; refusing to close down a makeshift place of worship; using loudspeakers outside a community center; participating in religious celebrations; distributing sweets during religious occasions,³ and carrying Shia religious materials and objects such as bumper stickers. The Saudi government, not only suppresses the Shia, but also uses its power to limit Shia and their activities in order to reduce their power and influence.

Since the Arab Spring, Saudi Shia have shown their opposition to their Wahabbi government by

¹ ) See al-Medina, 8 October 2004
² ) http://www.currenttrends.org/research/detail/the-shiites-of-saudi-arabia
³ ) U.S commission on International Religious freedom-Annul report 2001
participating in peaceful protest. Protests erupted in the region in March 2011 when a popular uprising in neighboring Bahrain was crushed with the assistance of Saudi and other Gulf troops.

The Saudi authorities reacted to the protests by opening fire on peaceful protestors and arresting many.\(^1\) The peaceful protestors were murdered, threatened, and arrested by Saudi authorities. In some cases of arrests, the court issued six months jail and 120-count lashes for participating in peaceful demonstrations.\(^2\)

The following chapter intends to highlight the ongoing discrimination toward Shia in Saudi.

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CHAPTER 2
Violations to Human Rights in Saudi
Violations to Human Rights in Saudi

As a member of the United Nations, Saudi Arabia has accepted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; therefore, this country is responsible for providing equal human rights to all. However, the S.R.W’s investigators and reporters found many violations to human rights towards Shia in Saudi. This report aims to highlight those inhumane violations, and invite human rights activists and anti-terrorist organizations to work together and stop these violations, and restore Shia’s security and dignity.

The violations toward Shia include, but are not limited to the following categories.

- Violating the right to life,
- Violating the right to equal education,
- Violating the right to free expression,
- Violating the right to peaceful assembly,
- Violating the right of dignity and brotherhood,
- Violating the right to equal employment,

Violation to Articles 2-7-9-12 and 18 of the International Bill of Human Rights (IBHR)

Violation to Freedom, Protection against discrimination, Arbitrary arrest and Interference with privacy

Religious freedom is virtually non-existent in Saudi Arabia. The Government does not provide legal recognition or protection for freedom of religion, and it is severely restricted in practice. In Saudi Arabia, no religion is completely free to practice their faith except for pro-government Wahabbi. The law claims to “guarantee and protect the right to private worship for all, who gather in homes for religious practice”. In practice, however, this right is not always respected. 1

Based on this claim made by law makers, Shia are permitted to observe Ashura in certain communities. However, Shia still face consequences for practicing their right. On January 12, 2009, Rasid.com reported that students and government employees who missed school or work on a Shia holiday, Ashura, were "punished." The nature of the punishment was not specified. 2 Had government respected its own claim, Shia should not have been punished for practicing their faith in the privacy of their homes.

Shiitenews.com reports that both the governor of Al-Khobar city and the director of Criminal Investigation forced Shia clerics to sign written pledges, which stated “not to stir up sectarian or rallies,” aimed towards the ban on conducting congregation prayers at Shia chapels and homes. The Saudi authorities have been using constant pressures on Al-Muhanna, a Shia cleric, by restricting him from opening a chapel or welcoming Shia guests at his house.

The same source also reports the arbitrary arrest of four Shia citizens, sentenced for a full month, under the pretext of opening their own homes as chapels for their community. ¹

These acts of the Saudi Arabian government clearly violate the following Articles of the IBHR:

Article 2:
• Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 7:
• All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 9:
• No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 12:
• No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honors and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 18:
• Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Violation to Freedom of Religion

Religious Restrictions

Religious restriction under Saudi government goes as far as prohibiting the entrance of non-Wahhabi symbols and artifacts into Saudi Arabia.

Christians and Jews are not allowed to bring their religious symbols into Saudi Arabia; Bibles, Stars of David, crucifixes and similar artifacts are prohibited items. According to a report in The Jerusalem Post, if discovered, Saudi authorities at the airport or borders will confiscate them. Although the government claims this law is for non-Muslims, in practice however, this law is not limited to non-Muslims. Shia Muslims are among those who cannot bring their symbols into the country; Shia Muslim prayer books, prayer stones, and any other objects that represent Shia belief are prohibited. Many Shia, who travel to Saudi Arabia for the annual pilgrimage, complain that their prayer books are confiscated at the airport, and as a sign of disrespect, visibly thrown into the trash!

Demolition of the al-Baqi’s shrine is one of the worst crimes done towards Shia by the King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia in May 1, 1925. al-Baqi’ is a cemetery in Medina located to the southeast of the Masjid al-Nabawi. It contains many of Prophet Muhammad’s relatives such as his wife, grandfather, and companions; the cemetery therefore holds much significance. Among those buried in the al-Baqi are 4 grandsons of the Prophet who are also four Imams of the Shia. The Wahhabis believed that visiting the graves and the shrines of the Prophets, the Imams, or the saints was a form of idolatry and totally un-Islamic. They entered Madina to desecrate al-Baqi’s shrine as well as every mosque they came across. An attempt was even made to demolish the Prophet’s tomb, but for one reason or another, the idea was abandoned.

Many protests and demonstrations took place after the demolition. Even now, there are many protests on the anniversary of the demolition of the al-Baqi. Shia around the world get together in front of the Saudi Arabia embassy, asking the Saudi government to restore the shrines.

1) http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,292796,00.html
2) http://www.al-islam.org/shrines/baqi.htm
Closure of Shia and Ismaili Mosques

Closure of Shia Islamic centers and mosques are among Saudi Arabia strategies to limit Shia in this country. Rasid.com and Shia Rights Watch reported closure of the largest Shia mosque in Al-Ahsa, one of the Shia cities in Saudi Arabia. According to Rasid, Saudi security authorities ordered the closure of the newly established Shia mosque Buhaligha, established earlier this year (2011). The closures took place in the beginning of the month of Muharram, during the period in which Shia commemorate the death of Imam Hussein, Prophet Mohammad’s grandson. The authorities have not given a clear explanation for this action.

On Friday, July 17th, 2009 Saudi forces surrounded the Shia mosque in Khobar in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The forces prevented Shia from performing the Friday service for the fourth week in a row. Security patrols occupied all entrances to the mosque and told people to go back. This mosque is the fourth one of Shia mosques which were closed in Khobar by the authorities for more than a year. It is marked that the campaign of closing Shia mosques in Khobar involved an Ismaili mosque in the same city which is inhabited by dozens of thousands of Shia citizens.  
Anti-Shia movement in Saudi also affected Ismailis. The Saudi authorities devised and carried out a detailed plan to shut down Ismaili mosques, and arrest worshippers on the day the Ismailis celebrate the Muslim feast of Eid al-Fitr, year 2000. According to the Human Rights Watch report, this act led by Saudi authorities later weakened relations between Ismaili Najranis and the governor, which led to the arrest and torture of many Ismaili Shia. The latest crackdown is proof that discrimination toward Shia in Saudi Arabia will not rest.

Also The “Freedom in shackles” a report published by Adala Center states:

“On 3 April 2012, Saudi authorities demolished a mosque belonging to the Ismaili sect in the Thoqba neighborhood of Khobar city in the Eastern Province. Although, the mosque was built four decades ago, the authorities have now claimed that it lacks a building license. The demolition of the mosque is unjustifiable because Saudi authorities refuse to give permission for building any mosque for Twelver Shia or Ismailis outside Hasa, Qatif and Najran. This is with the exception of one case in which the authorities gave permission to build a Shia mosque in Damman. However, Shias are not allowed to practice their rituals outside these areas, which forces them to buy or rent places which are then used as places of worship.”

1) http://www.saudishia.com/?act=artc&id=148
2) On Eid al-Fitr, Muslims celebrate the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting and asceticism
Fatwa’s Against Shia by Wahhabi Scholars

Prejudice in Saudi takes on many extreme forms, with clerics and others who damn Shia as the principal enemy. Wahhabi scholars create an atmosphere of hatred within the society, and encourage Muslims to abhor Shia. They abuse their religious power, and build grounds for violence and extremists.

This act is against Article 1 of the IBHR states:

Article 1:

- “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood“.

Wahhabi scholars act as instigators that call for hate instead of brotherhood. The fatwas that support and prove the fact that Wahhabism calls for hatred between Shia and Sunni are many.

Wahhabi scholars in Saudi Arabia are permitted to sanction violence against the Shia. What follows are fatwas passed by the country’s leading cleric, Abdul-Aziz ibn Baz, which denounced Shia as apostates. Similarly, Adul-Rahman al-Jibrin, a former member of the Higher Council of Ulama, sanctioned the killing of Shia. This call was reiterated in Wahhabi religious literature as late as 2002.

In 1991, Abdullah bin Abd al-Rahman al-Jibrin, then a member of the Higher Council of Ulama, issued a fatwa designating Shia as apostates and condoning their killing.

In January 1994, responding to a question about the Rawafid (derogatory name of Shia) praying in Sunni mosques, he issued a fatwa asserting "they are the enemy and may God fight those that lie".

In another fatwa that year in answer to a question about how to deal with Shia in the workplace, he stated that, "it is necessary to display abhorrence, loathing, and hatred [toward them]...and the priority is to strive to restrict/oppress them".

Crisisgroup.org reports that the Wahhabi scholars published a fatwa calling upon the Shia to "convert" to Islam therefore some Shia left the country.

Since then the publication and distribution of religious texts is forbidden, the Shia call to prayer is outlawed, and centers of religious studies is dismantled.

Some of the most egregious examples abated after September 11, 2001, when the government
clamped down on radical speech more generally and warned clerics on its payroll to tone down their rhetoric. Still, institutions under less direct oversight continue propagating anti-Shia sentiment in the most vituperative of terms, in fact in many government dependent mosques, the clerics make prayers against Shia.

In 2002, the powerful Jeddah-based International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), a leading Saudi charity, disseminated a book in al-Hasa, One Hundred Questions and Answers on Charitable Work, which claimed:

*It was necessary for Sunni Muslims to hate (baghida) the people of heresy (ahl al-bid'a), to loath them and to scorn them as rafida, deniers of God, grave visitors [an act of heresy according to Wahhabis], and as apostates. It is incumbent on the Muslim according to his ability...to get rid of their evil*¹

In another incident, Safar al-Hawali, a well-known and respected religious scholar who spent time in prison for political activities, boycotted the 2003 National Dialogue due to Shia participation.²

Saudi Shia told Crisis Group that similar episodes also occurred at the local level. In the run-up to its widely publicized Counter-Terrorism Conference in February 2005, the government sponsored talks and seminars denouncing militancy around the Kingdom. At one panel discussion on the need for greater tolerance at King Faisal University in Hofuf, a mixed Shia-Sunni city in the Eastern Province, Sunni religious figures reportedly stormed out because local Shia religious leaders refused to move from front row seats.³

Finally, Saudi religious scholars have issued edicts suggesting Sunnis avoid greeting Shia, or eating with them.⁴

In March 2006 a judge respectively annulled the marriage of an Ismaili man to a Sunni woman because of his lack of religious qualification.⁵

Saudi official religious institutes violate the Article 1 of IBHR that calls for the right of brotherhood among humans.

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¹) Text excerpted in al-Medina, 22 October 2004. The IIRO text was distributed in the mixed Shiite-Sunni communities of al-Hasa.
³) The incident prompted local Shites to ask, “how can we wipe out terrorism, when terrorists are running the system?” Crisis Group interview, Hofuf, 22 April 2005.
⁵) http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/sep/22/religion.islam
Violation in Education System

Under the Saudi education system, Shia are faced with multiple layers of discrimination. Children’s Rights Portal reports Only 85% of children attend school in this country. In fact, the school is not compulsory in Saudi Arabia. ¹

The Quality of education is law and only concentrates on teaching of Islam.² The education is particularly difficult and restricted to Wahhabi curriculums. There is no tolerance towards any other belief system besides the Wahhabi.³ The curriculum openly teaches intolerance towards non-Wahhabi Muslims. Saudi textbooks clearly encourage students to hate and fight non-Wahhabi believers. After September 11, 2001 the government promised to revise the school textbooks to teach more tolerance, however, research done by the Institute for Gulf Affairs reveals that 2010/2011 school year text books still contained hateful speech.⁴ Saudi children learn terrorist behavior, violence and hatred from early age in school. The textbook teachings manifest themselves in the behavior of teachers and Wahhabi students toward non-Wahhabi student. Shia students complain of prejudice and open hostility from Wahhabi instructors, who regularly refer to Shia as kuffar (infidels), mushrikin (polytheists) orrafida (derogatory name of Shia). Furthermore, Shia students have no right to express and acknowledge their belief.

Articles, 1, 19 and 26 of IBHR are clearly violated in Saudi Arabia’s education system.

 Article 1:
• All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 19:
• Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 26
• (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
• (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and

¹) http://childrensrightsportal.org/saudi-arabia/
²) http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002116/211628e.pdf
⁴) http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/12/21/extremist-teachings-remain-in-saudi-textbooks-despite-kings-claims-reform/#ixzz1hFKF1iCS
to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

• (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

• The violations do not stop there, but manifest itself in denying Shia students dignity and discriminating against them in employment.

• Article 23
• (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
• (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
• (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
• (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

According to the Center for Religious Freedom of Freedom House, Shia are not well represented on school faculties and administrations in the Eastern Province, again despite constituting the overwhelming majority. In fact there was not a single Shia principal in any of the region’s girls’ schools until August of 2012. Shia teachers at schools around the Eastern prevalence are warned to keep their faith private, with heavy penalties for violations, while Wahhabism is emphasized throughout the curriculum.

The Wahhabi textbooks condemn and denigrate Shia practices as heretical and call them “polytheists”, command Muslims to hate Christians, Jews, polytheists and other “non-believers”, and teach that the Crusades never ended, and identify Western social service providers, centers for academic studies, and campaigns for women’s rights as part of the modern phase of the Crusades. ¹ The Saudi education system violates at least four different Human Rights.

Violation to Right to Equal Employment

Shia, in Saudi Arabia, face discriminations in employment. Saudi Shia have long complained about their inability to work for the government, or climb the job ladder for critical positions. According to the “Human Rights Watch Report, Denied Dignity, and Amnesty report about Saudi Arabia,” Shia face much discrimination in employment. The Government restricts employment of Shia in the oil and petrochemical industries. The Government also discriminates against Shia

in higher education, through unofficial restrictions on the number of Shia admitted to universities. ¹ It is almost impossible for a Shia to work in the police force or in the military.

SRW investigator recently interviewed Maha, a Saudi citizen who moved to USA looking for job opportunities. Maha says she has a degree in computer science, but cannot work in her town in al-Qatif. Maha says most companies are owned by Wahhabi Muslims and they do not hire a Shia. She was asked how would employees know if you are Shia or not? She answered they recognize us by our names, or our city of birth. Maha misses home and family but she needs a source of income that she does not have in Saudi. Maha is one of many Shia who cannot have a decent job due to their faith. The employment discriminations against Shia results in poverty and difficult living conditions for them.³ According to the IBHR, it is a violation of universal human rights to restrict the rights to employment.

Article 23

• (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

• (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

• (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

• (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests. ³

² Shites are certainly not alone in facing socio-economic challenges. Per capita income dropped precipitously from a high of $18,000 in 1980/1981 to less than $9,000 in the late 1990s. But there is every indication that Shites have been hardest hit; indeed, during the oil boom of the 1970s, they did not experience a significant improvement in living conditions.
The following pages include graphical contents, please be advised
Case Study/ Narrations

Members of the Shia community face many types of inhumane treatment in Saudi Arabia. Recent Arab Spring has increased the unrest for Shia in this country as well. Some of the violations to the International Bill of Human Rights include arbitrary arrest, detention, execution, no freedom of expression, and inability to participate in peaceful reforms. The Amnesty International Organization states that from February 2011 onwards, protests by the minority Shia community have been regularly reported in the oil-rich Eastern Province, including in the cities of al-Qatif, the nearby town of Awwamiya, and areas of al-Ahsa; most of these protests were calling for the release of people held without charge or trial. ¹ The most recent poll, as of July 2012, shows that 600 adults are in Saudi Arabia prisons, accompanied by 35 children, all different ages, some under the age of eighteen. In the past fourteen months, 150 adults and 11 children have been reported missing. Their family members believe the government has captured, and may be currently torturing them. ²

The following section contains case studies of victims that lost their right to life or protection against arbitrary arrest, privacy, freedom of expression, and the right to peaceful assembly.

Cases of Violations to Article 3 of IBHR that states:

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person

I. According to the Ministry of Interior, on November 21st, 2011, two citizens were killed and six others injured; among them a woman and two security men. Other reports indicate, Ali al-Filfil, aged 24, was among those killed. The incidents occurred during a protest in commemoration of Nasser al-Muhaishi, a 19-year-old Shia man, who was killed under unclear circumstances at a checkpoint in al-Qatif a day earlier. ³

II. On November 23rd, 2011, following the funerals of Ali al-Filfil and Nasser al-Muhaishi, a march took place in al-Qatif, in which violent incidents led to murder of Munib Othman al-Adnan, aged 21, and Abdullah Iqriris, aged 26. ⁴ Sources have reported that the protesters, including the two men, were completely unarmed and peaceful.

III. Four men have been killed in protests on November 25th, 2011, in Eastern Saudi Arabia, which marks the most serious violent outbreak in the Kingdom since the start of the Arab Spring. Hamza al-Hassan, an opposition activist, said that the latest violence started last weekend when Nasser al-Muheishi, 19, was killed at a checkpoint near Qatif, an oasis which is a Shia center. Mr. Hassan says that “he was killed and left for three or four hours on the ground, because the government refused to let his family collect the body”. This led to mass protests in and around the city of Qatif in which a second man, Ali al-Filfil, aged 24 ,

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¹) http://wsws.org/articles/2011/dec2011/saud-d05.shtml
²) Srwpress.com
was shot dead by police, The Saudi Interior Ministry could not be reached for comment on the allegations. ¹

IV. Ali Agrairees and Muneeb Aladnan are two Shia, killed by Saudi security forces Wednesday evening November 23rd, 2011. Forces disrupted the funeral of two Shia killed in that week, and raised the death toll in the Eastern Province to four, since Sunday. An activist said: “Everything was fine until the body arrived, then the people got very angry, and began to chant anti-government slogans, which elicited gunshots in the air by the riot police.” He added, “After the evening prayer, people returned to the streets after evening prayer, whereby the riot police started shooting at the people directly.”²

V. A Saudi youth was killed Sunday night, November 21st, 2011 by police fire at a security checkpoint in Qatif. Witnesses told Rasid.com that the 19 year old Naser al-Muheshi was seen lain on the ground near a checkpoint at Riyadh Street after being shot by police. Initially it was unknown if al-Muheshi was dead or not, but later sources indicate that he was dead when his body was brought to the hospital. Witnesses allege that the victim was left laid at the checkpoint for a long time until an ambulance arrived to rescue him. Till this moment, no details are available about the reason why the police opened fire at the victim.³

VI. Ali al-Felfel died Monday night, November 23rd 2011 by a police gunshot. Sources confirm that 20 year old Ali al-Felfel. He was shot in the chest. The victim, from Shwaika neighborhood, was taken to al-Zahra Hospital, immediately after being shot, where he died.

VII. 21 year old Muneer al-Meedani died from a bullet wound to his chest by police, as they were dispersing demonstrators from the town center of al-Qatif on Thursday, February 10th, 2012. ⁴ Investigations repeatedly state that Saudi security forces used live ammunitions to disperse the demonstrators in Qatif. According to the Agency France Press, following the questioning of Saudi authorities, a police spokesman in the Eastern Province declined to comment, “we cannot give any comments regarding this incident.”

VIII. According to witnesses, Akbar al-Shakhouri and Mohamed al-Felfel were shot dead on Sunday July 8th, 2012. The two men were participating in a peaceful protest, when they were shot by police snipers, stationed on rooftops. According to the euronews.com fourteen people were injured in the same day. The Interior Ministry denies the shootings, and claims that there were no clashes between protesters and police at the protest.

IX. 18 year old Abdallah Ja’afar al-Ojami was shot by security forces on Friday July 13th, 2012, as he was protesting and demanding the release of their cleric Sheikh Nimr, who was injured and arrested last week by Anti-Shia forces. Abdallah was killed, and his body was placed in the toilet. Signs of torture were found on the shoulder area, neck and face of Abdallah.

Cases of Violations to Article 9 that states:

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile

I. Munir Baqir Al-Jessas, a Shia rights activist, had been detained without charge or trial since November 2009, reportedly for writing articles that he published online advocating greater respect for human rights in Saudi Arabia, particularly the rights of the minority Shia community.¹

II. Sheikh Tawfiq Jaber Ibrahim al-Amer, a Shia cleric in his forties and father of seven children, was detained by Saudi forces on February 27th, 2011, two days after he had advocated political reforms in his Friday sermon.² He was released on March 6 after a week detained incommunicado.³ He had been arrested twice previously in 2008 and 2009. His last arrest was on August 3rd in connection with his calls for reform while on his way home from a mosque in the city of al-Hufuf. His family did not know where he was until August 8th, when they found out he was detained in a police station, west of the city of Dammam. He had been detained and held in solitary confinement until then.⁴ Ibrahim

al-Amer was transferred on August 22nd to al-Ha’ir prison. He has been charged with “inciting public opinion”. Sheikh Tawfiq AlAmer appeared in court in August in the capital Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

AlAmer, who entered his second year in prison without trial earlier this month, received a list from the court that included ten charges against him.

The list of charges included making sharp statements against Saudi authorities, incitement against the Saudi government, calling for political transformation as a challenge and provoking citizens, also, involved charges of libeling the nation’s religious scholars, and, by that, they meant AlAmer’s response to the statement which was issued by twenty-two Salafi clerics who described Muslim Shiites as infidels and called for combating them.

The judge had set a date of the second meeting for hearing Sheikh AlAmer’s statements.

III. Hassan NajiZawad, aged 20, and his brother Ahmed NajiZawad, aged 18, were reportedly stopped on March 18th, 2011 by police as they were returning from a diwaniya , a traditional social gathering, in al-Qatif. The police accused them of attending a protest. The brothers were reportedly put in a police car and beaten, before being taken to al-Qatif and questioned. The following day they were transferred to a police station in Dammam, where they were held for two weeks. They were transferred to the General Prison in Dammam, and were held until their release in mid-May without charge. 1

IV. Hussain al-Yousef, a correspondent for the Shia website Rasid News Network, was also among those arrested March 3rd, 2011 at the protests, and released on March 8th. He was later arrested for a second time on March 27th, apparently for taking part in a protest in the city of Safwa. He was summoned to a police station in Safwa and arrested on arrival. He was then transferred to a police station in al-Khobar. Hussain al-Yousef has back problems, and his condition reportedly deteriorated after his arrest. This was partly due to the manner in which he was transported into a truck, and partly because of the overcrowded prison. Prisoners were reportedly forced to take turns to sleep because of the lack of space. He was accused of inciting and taking part in a protest. He was released on July 18th, but his legal status is unclear. Reports suggest that he continues to suffer from health problems as a result of his detention conditions. 2

V. Mufeed al-Farraj, aged 37, was arrested at his shop in Awwamiya on April 18th, 2011. He was accused of inciting and participating in protests. A week before his arrest he had been asked to report to a police station in Awwamiya. After his arrest, he was held for two weeks in a number of different prisons, until he was finally transferred to Dammam prison.

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1) "Saudi police detain 30 Shi’ites activists”, AFP, 28 April 2011 and “Campaign of arrests affecting 25 young men following demonstrations in al-Qatif” (in Arabic), Rasid News Network 28 April 2011, at http://rasid.com/artc.php?id=44128&hl=%C7%E1%C7%DA%CA%DE%C7%E1 accessed on 25 November 2011.

He was released without charge on July 30th, 2011. Later, when he attempted to travel to Turkey for work purposes, he found out that a travel ban had been imposed on him without his knowledge. Border authorities informed him that he had been banned from travelling by order of the Eastern Province governor.

VI. Adnan al-Zaher, aged 40, was arrested on April 24th, 2011. He was held in al-Qatif police station, then transferred to Dhahran prison, and finally a week later to the General Prison in Dammam. Two weeks before his arrest security forces told him to report to the authorities, where he was questioned about his organization and participation in protests. He managed to be released without charge in July as he proved that he was in China during the protests.

VII. Fadhel Maki al-Manasif, a 26-year-old human right activist and writer, was arrested on May 1st, 2011. He is well known for opposing discrimination against Shia Muslims, and had documented the arrests of Shia Muslims during protests held East of the country in February. He was told, on April 30th, to report to the Criminal Investigation Department at the police station in Awwamiya. He went there the next day, and was arrested. He was transferred the same day first to a police station in al-Qatif, and later to a police station in the nearby district of al-Thuqbah, where he was detained. He was then moved to the al-Khobar prison, where he was allowed visitations. On May 18th, he was transferred to the GDI prison in the city of Dammam, where he was held incommunicado until his release on August 22nd, 2011. He was dismissed from his job following this initial arrest. He was arrested again on October at a police checkpoint between the towns of Awwamiya and Safwa in the Eastern Province, and taken to the Safwa police station. A few hours earlier before his arrest, he had attempted to negotiate with the police regarding the detention of two elderly men, who were arrested in order to pressure their sons to surrender themselves to the authorities. A crowd had gathered outside the police station, and he was reported to have tried to calm them down. He was transferred to the Dhadran police station and detained in solitary confinement, with no access to the outside world until October 10th when he was transferred again to the GDI prison in Dammam. Since his arrest, Fadhel Maki al-Manasif has been allowed to call his family only once - on October 10 – to inform them of his place of detention. He has not been allowed visits from his family, lawyer, or any other. He is held incommunicado, which puts him at the risk of torture and other ill-treatments.

VIII. On October 2nd, 2011, two elderly men in their sixties were reported to have been arrested in Awwamiya in order to pressure their sons to hand themselves over to the police.

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for their participation in protests. Their arrests sparked local people to gather around the police station. Sources told the Amnesty International that the riot police opened fire on the protesters.¹

IX. Mohammad Alshamimy, a Shia Scholar son, was arrested Friday April 20th, 2012. Mohammad was arrested previously in Bahrain, and released after spending several months in jail, without any explanation for his arrest from Bahraini authorities.

On Friday April, 20 he was arrested again along with his son. Mohammad Alshamimy and his son Ali were taken to an unknown place after their phones were searched without any explanations.

ON June 29th, Mr. Al-Shamimi was released from prison, where his family members noticed Mohammad did not recognize his own parents and family members, became mute, and lost all ability to communicate and speak due to tortures done through electrical shocks, and the shape of his jaw has been curved, or misplaced. This is an initial and early aftermath effect of tortures done to Mohammad in Dammam Prison in Saudi Arabia. Until now no one knows what is the reason of Alshamimys' arrest.

X. Kamel Abbas al-Ahmed was detained in May 2012. Kamel Abbas al-Ahmed is an engineer, and brother to the Saudi dissident Ali Abbas al-Ahmed, head of the Gulf Institute in Washington. This is not the first time that al-Ahmed has been detained. He was harassed by security forces, and detained for nearly nine years in the Kingdom’s prisons without clear reasons. His passport was also seized nearly 18 months ago to deny him the freedom of travelling outside the country.

XI. Nimr al-Nimr, one of the most influencing scholars of Saudi Arabia, was arrested again. Although he was arrested previously, he was wounded this time as he tried to escape. His arrest resulted in a series of protests, arrests, and killings of Saudi Shia.

Most cases that mentioned earlier also violate following articles of the IBHR:

Article 10:
• Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing...

Article 12:
• No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation..

Article 13:
• Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state...

Article 18:
• Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief...

Article 19:
• Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression...

Article 20:
• Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association

Other Cases

In 2011 a great number of Saudi Shia were arrested and detained in Saudi Arabia following peaceful protests. Approximately twenty-four people were detained on March 3rd and 4th, 2011, following the protests in al-Qatif and Awwamiya. The protests had been mainly a call for the release of other detainees, an end to discrimination against Shia, and an objection to job conditions. In some cases authorities had closed access to the Awwamiya village after they had set fire to disperse Shia protesters. On Monday October 4th, 2011, Awwamiya was sealed, with twenty people wounded; this marked one of the most violent incidents in Saudi Arabia’s past. This village is home to much of Saudi Arabia’s Shia minority.

From March 2011 until April 2012, 560 individuals were arrested of which 124 remain behind bars (until May 2012), some even without charges or trial. Due to these arrests, at least 33 individuals were dismissed from work.

As of May 2012, At least 41 detainees are still in Dammam Intelligence Prison and their families are not allowed to visit them despite the fact that some of them have been in prison for months. For example, human rights activist Fadhel Al Manasif was detained seven months ago and was not allowed family visits.

Prisoners’ and Protesters’ Illtreatment

Amnesty International reports, police repeatedly kicked and used batons on at least three of the protesters. The twenty-four detainees were released on March 8th without charge, after they signed a pledge to not protest again.

2 ) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/saudiarabia/8806765/Saudi-Arabia-Police-open-fire-on-protesters.html
3 ) http://www.adalacenter.net/index.php?act=artc&id=666
4 ) Amnesty International urgent action, Protesters arrested in Saudi Arabia, UA 61/11 (Index: MDE
Adalah Centre documented several allegations of torture which took place in Dammam Intelligence Prison which include hitting, kicking, using electric shocks on sensitive areas, using fire extinguishers for hitting prisoners and making them stand for long periods with their hands held high. These allegations were also confirmed in the National Society for Human Rights’ report on 4 April 2012 regarding intelligence prisons in Saudi Arabia. The report claims that “some of detainees were subjected to ill treatment during interrogations in order to forcefully extract confessions.”

**Cases of Child Detentions and Abduction by Saud Authorities**

Saudi Arabia lacks specific laws that protect individuals under the age of eighteen. Despite the fact that there are many international laws regarding child detentions, child detentions and ill treatments are not illegal in this country. Shia children suffer greatly in Saudi Arabia due to their faith and belief system. In recent months many children have been detained without any law or system to protect their rights. Adala Center for Human Rights reports 35 children were arrested, 11 of which are still in prison. The following list contains the names of a few children detained in Saudi Arabia:

1. Mahmoud Isa al-Qallaf, 17 years old, from Showika district in Qatif, detained in Dar al-Molahza juvenile prison.
2. Abdul Aziz Al Shbeeb, 15 years old, from Qatif.
4. Hussain Zeki Al Rokieyah, 10 years old, from Qatif.
6. Ahmad Abo Sultan, 18 years old, from the al-Khamesa district in Qatif.
7. Sajjad Hussain Al Abadi, 17 years old, from the Jaroudiyah town in Qatif.
8. Mohammad Hussain Shamla, 15 years, from Tarout Island in Qatif.
10. Mahmoud al-Shakhouri, 17 years, from the Awwamiyah town in Qatif.
11. Mohammad Mansour, 15 from al-Munera district in Qatif.

Imamhussein.tv reports that some Shia children have been kidnapped in recent weeks in order to stop their parent from participating in protests. Saudi government is using all its power violating and suppressing Shia rights. Mustafa Abdul Wahid al-Jamid is one child who was kidnapped by security forces in check-point of al-Nasera in Qatif. There is no new about Mustafa since August 5, 2012. Since killings and detentions did not prevent Shia from expressing their dissatisfaction with the dictator government, Saudi authorities are kidnapping minors to pressure their parents to keep
CHAPTER 4
Conclusion

quiet. This act of Saud authorities is very inhumane and must be stopped immediately.
Conclusion

Shia have always been “on undesirable and heathen minorities” through Wahabbies eyes.  

Saudi authorities clearly violate many articles of the International Bill of Human Rights. As mentioned earlier, Saudi Arabia is a member of the United Nations, therefore this country has accepted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Saudi Arabia is among the world’s worst violators of human rights. Arrest, torture, and abuse are very common in this country; minorities lack legal rights, and the government has banned human rights organizations from monitoring the situation within the country. Al -Saud uses all its power to suppress and limit Shia, and openly violates their rights. Most humanitarian organizations and departments such as Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, Crisis Group, the US department of State, and the Red Cross agree that Saudi has gone too far in violating human rights, yet no organization was successful to stop the violations. It is time for all mentioned organizations to cooperate and take serious actions and urge Al-Saud to respect humanity and human lives.

Recommendations

Shia Rights Watch urges United States government to take actions in support of the Shia in Saudi Arabia and hold the Saudi Arabian’s government accountable for its violations of human rights.

To this end, SRW recommends that U.S government urge the Saudi government to:

• Stop committing violence against peaceful protesters;

• Encourage tolerance and non-violent;

• Free all innocent prisoners, especially children;

• Pay financial compensation to the family of victims;

• Protect Shia places of worship and religious buildings from attack or destruction and respect the religious freedom of all Saudis;

• Rebuild all destroyed Shia mosques and Islamic centers;

• Lift restrictions on Shia religious rituals and practices;

• Protect fully the rights of religious minorities under the law;

• Acknowledge and respect Shia scholars;

• Engage in a respectful and peaceful dialogue with the goal of creating and institutionalizing mechanisms that would encourage respect for the fundamental human rights of all Saudi people;

1) The SHia Revival, by Dr. Vali Nasr page 98.
• Initiate human right training;
• Initiates religion tolerance trainings especially in schools;
• Allow Shia of Saudi’s capital, Riyadh, to build Shia Islamic centers and mosques
• Ban any anti-Shiatism in official agencies and organizations
• Restore the al-Baqi shrine and allow Shia to visit and hold religious ceremonies in the shrine.
According to the Center for Religious Freedom of Freedom House, Shia are not well represented on school faculties and administrations in the Eastern Province, again despite constituting the overwhelming majority. In fact there was not a single Shia principal in any of the region’s girls’ schools until August of 2012. Shia teachers at schools around the Eastern prevalence are warned to keep their faith private, with heavy penalties for violations, while Wahhabism is emphasized throughout the curriculum.

The Wahhabi textbooks condemn and denigrate Shia practices as heretical and call them “polytheists”, command Muslims to hate Christians, Jews, polytheists and other “non-believers”, and teach that the Crusades never ended, and identify Western social service providers, centers for academic studies, and campaigns for women’s rights as part of the modern phase of the Crusades. The Saudi education system violates at least four different Human Rights.

We will continue monitoring Saudi Arabian government action, there are many cases in progress and many discrimination toward Shia.