

Paris, January 13, 2019

SAUDI ARABIA - International justice - Human rights: The trial of human rights activists must be the trial of death penalty

This Sunday, January 13, 2019, Saudi human rights defenders Mrs Israa Bint Hassan Bin Abdullah al-Ghamgham, M. Ahmed Bin Hussein Bin Abdullah Al Matroud, M. Ali Bin Ahmed Bin Abdullah Uwaysir, M. Moussa bin Jaafar Bin Amin al-Hashim and M. Khalid Bin Abdullah bin Saud al-Ghanim, will face death penalty in a public hearing to be held before the Specialized Criminal Chambers in Saudi Arabia.

They are accused of instigating public disturbances and organizing peaceful protests against the government. Among the defendants, Mrs Israa Bint Hassan Bin Abdullah al-Ghamgham could be the first female human rights activist executed in Saudi Arabia.

French lawyers Jessica Finelle and François Zimeray have been instructed alongside international lawyer Oliver Windridge and a group of HR lawyers from the United States, to support the defence of the five human rights defenders.

To this day, Saudi authorities have consistently ignored repeated calls by UN experts and international human rights organizations to halt violations of human rights and persecution of human rights activists.

Top UN human rights experts (part of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council) have, on 2 January 2018, decried "Saudi Arabia's continued use of counter-terrorism and security-related laws against human rights defenders, urging it to end the repression and release all those detained for peacefully exercising their rights", denouncing "a worrying pattern of widespread and systematic arbitrary arrests and detention".

The UN experts exposed that "despite being elected as member of the Human Rights Council at the end of 2016, Saudi Arabia has continued its practice of silencing, arbitrarily arresting, detaining and persecuting human rights defenders and critics", underlining that "more than 60 prominent religious figures, writers, journalists, academics and civic activists are reported to have been detained in a wave of arrests since September (2017) ...".

The international team of lawyers will revert again to the UN experts in order for them to urge the Saudi government to immediately release and acquit the five human rights activists facing death sentences as a result of their peaceful political engagement.

The Zimeray & Finelle Law firm

Zimeray & Finelle combines expertise in complex legal challenges with international diplomacy, offering clients unique, tailor-made legal services, and specialises in international human rights (including corporate compliance), transnational crime, and conflict resolution.

About François Zimeray

François Zimeray is an international lawyer, formerly serving as the French Human Rights Ambassador-at-large, the French Ambassador in Denmark and as a Member of the European Parliament. Called to the Paris Bar in 1987, François Zimeray has extensive experience dealing with complex international legal challenges, for individuals, corporations and governments. Previously, François was a partner in a leading Paris law firm where, for 20 years, he advised and assisted corporations on transnational commercial disputes both in litigation and arbitration. In September 2018, he partnered with Jessica Finelle, lawyer since 2009, specializing in international criminal law, to create Zimeray & Finelle law firm.

At the same time, he joined the prestigious human rights law firm Doughty Street Chambers as associate tenant.

François Zimeray is the author of « J'ai vu partout le même visage », published by Plon in 2016.

About Jessica Finelle

Jessica Finelle, lawyer at the Paris Bar and partner at Zimeray & Finelle, specializes in international criminal law and human rights law. She has recently obtained a decision from independent UN experts, asserting that the detention of Général Mokoko, Congolese main opposition leader to President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, was arbitrary, calling for his immediate release and reparation of his prejudixce.

Press Contact :

Laurence Martin for Zimeray & Finelle
Corporate Communication & Press relations
Mobile : +33 (0) 6 47 69 85 99
E-mail : lm@zimerayfinelle.com