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Saudi Arabia: An Influential Saudi Cleric Calls for Beheading of Apostates

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The Center for Democracy and Human rights in Saudi Arabia, CDHR, Washington, DC.

www.cdhr.info

For Immediate Release

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Washington, DC (February 24, 2010). The Washington-based Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia unequivocally denounces Shaikh Abdulrahman Al-Barrak call for the beheading of those who initiate or accept gender mingling in schools or in the work place. "They should be given one chance to repent, but if they do not, they should be considered apostate and beheaded," Al-Barrak said.

Al-Barrak published his Fatwa, a religious edict, on his website, which is read by Muslims all over the world. The Saudi clerics (the religious branch of the government) participate fully in ruling Saudi Arabia. They are in total control of the country's sectarian and arbitrary judicial system as well as its educational institutions, including approval of schoolbooks.

Despite King Abdullah's cosmetic judicial and educational reforms, he and his large and diverse family (tribe) are keenly aware that the only base of legitimacy and source of power, which ensure their control of the country and its disenfranchised people, is the strength and ruthlessness of the theocratic establishment, which Shaikh Al-Barrak represents. Even if King Abdullah is serious about reforms, and most Saudis do not think he is but cannot say so, he is primarily accountable to his powerful and competing senior brothers who can easily override his decisions and/or render him powerless altogether.

Saudi Arabia's domestic policies affect most Muslims across the world. This is due to Saudi Arabia's centrality to Islam, control of its holy sites in Mecca and Medina, and influx of petrodollars. The Saudi autocratic and theocratic regime uses these powerful assets to exert its disproportionate influence and impose its will on Muslim communities worldwide. The Saudi government does this by exporting its stringent Wahhabi ideology, bribing heads of states, building religious schools and mosques wherever it wishes including in the US. This is the reason Muslim countries, represented by the Organization for Islamic Conference, OIC, sign up for whatever the Saudi ruling family wishes them to do.

Because of Saudi Arabia's powerful religious and financial influence in the Muslim World,

transforming Saudi educational and religious institutions should be President Obama and Secretary Clinton's first foreign policy order of business in the Muslim World. Appointing an American Muslim envoy to the OIC by the Administration strengthens and legitimizes the Saudi extremist religious ideology, Wahhabism, at home and throughout the world.

P.S.

* Posted on Secularism is a Women Issue, Friday 26 February 2010:

<http://www.siaawi.org/article1692.html>

<http://www.alwatan.com.sa/news/newsdetail.asp?issueno=3435&id=137688&groupID=0>