Dear

I am writing to draw your attention to Baroness Kennedy’s recent report into the death penalty in Saudi Arabia. If you have not read it I strongly encourage you to do so and you can find it here: <https://www.doughtystreet.co.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/Helena%20Kennedy%20Report%20on%20Death%20Penalty%20KSA%20-%2029.7.19%20-%20New.pdf>.

The report makes for harrowing reading. It describes Saudi Arabia’s increasing use of the death penalty, frequently for non-lethal or non-violent crimes, mass executions often by means of public beheadings, convictions based on confessions extracted through torture, grossly unfair trials and the conviction and execution of juveniles. These practices are in flagrant violation of international law and in contravention of the Arab Charter on Human Rights to which it is a signatory.

As you know, Saudi Arabia has also been widely criticized for its aggression towards Yemen, its involvement in the Khashoggi affair and its frequent abuses of the human rights of its own citizens. This report into the country’s use of the death penalty is yet another shocking example of the flagrant disregard for human rights in a country that is supposed to be an ally of the West, behaviour that in most other countries would attract the severest condemnation from our government and the West in general.

The report makes a number of important recommendations including:

* The declaration by Saudi Arabia of an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its eventual abolition
* The convening of an international fact-finding mission by an independent and politically neutral organization
* The possible use of targeted sanctions, refusal of the G20 to attend the 2020 summit in Riyadh and the suspension of Saudi Arabia’s membership of the Human Rights Council should it fail to comply with the report’s other recommendations.

I urge you read to and consider Baroness Kennedy’s report, to ask the Foreign Secretary to do the same and to make representations to the UK Government to support the recommendations made in this report and to condemn in no uncertain terms Saudi Arabia’s use of the death penalty.