



Association for the Defense of Ahlulbait Rights

دفاع از حقوق پیروان اهل بیت (ع) - سوئیس

Shia Minority in Saudi Arabia: Will the Longstanding Discrimination End?

Dear Madam/Sir,

There is a long history of systematic discrimination and hostility against Shia minority in Saudi Arabia. The kingdom does not tolerate public worship by adherents of religions other than the government approved Islam and systematically discriminates against Shia Muslims. Government offices ban Shia religious observations and policemen prevent Shia from enjoying the same rights of worship as other people do. Members of religious police attack the belief system of Shia, stating that they are considered infidels.

In addition, within the judicial system, the Shia face various cases of discrimination including: arbitrary arrests, denial of access to justice, discriminatory verdicts and religiously motivated charges. In October 2014, Saudi Specialized Criminal Court sentenced prominent Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr to death on a host of vague charges, based largely on his peaceful criticism of Saudi officials. The number of Shia judges in the Judiciary is extremely limited and the few Judges rule only in the Shia cities of the kingdom.

State practices of discrimination and exclusion toward Shia have created a sentiment of unequal citizenship, however the situation is exacerbated by the recent attacks of Saudi lead coalition to Yemen.

In April 2015, Saudi police raided on a Shia-dominated oil-rich eastern province, as the Saudi-led coalition bombardment of rebels in neighboring Yemen prompted fears of the fighting spilling over the border.

According to the locals 30 arrests were made in the raid. Saudi Arabian officials distorted the reality of the incident saying that, the death and injuries in the raids took place during a security operation to target "terrorist elements," their weapons and communications equipment.

Our organization would like to ask the forum of minority Issues to study the alleged cases of discrimination against Shia in Saudi society including the legal and Judicial System, offering practical recommendations and urging the Monarchy to eliminate the longstanding discriminations.