



Christian
Solidarity Worldwide

Saudi Arabia

**Annual Report
2002**

May 2002

SAUDI ARABIA - ANNUAL REPORT 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	COUNTRY PROFILE.....	3
1.1	MAP AND GENERAL PROFILE.....	3
1.1.1	Government.....	4
1.1.2	Economy.....	4
1.1.3	Military.....	4
1.1.4	International Disputes.....	5
1.2	HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
1.3	GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS.....	6
1.3.1	Thematic concerns.....	6
1.3.2	KSA and the United Nations.....	6
1.4	RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND.....	7
1.4.1	Authorities responsible for arrests and monitoring religious practices.....	7
1.4.2	Government defence of its position on freedom of religion.....	8
1.4.3	Statements made by KSA Government officials.....	9
1.5	CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	10
2	REVIEW OF 2001.....	11
2.1	SUMMARY.....	11
2.2	DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL CASES.....	11
2.2.1	Lunch meeting raided, December 2000.....	11
2.2.2	Raul Macatunao, April 2001.....	12
2.2.3	Wilfredo Caliuag, July 2001.....	12
2.2.4	14 Arrests in Jiddah, July-September 2001.....	12
2.3	CSW ACTION.....	14
2.3.1	Prayer.....	14
2.3.2	Information sharing.....	14
2.3.3	Publicity.....	14
2.3.4	Campaigning initiatives.....	14
2.4	RESPONSES FROM THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT.....	14
2.5	CONCLUSIONS.....	15
2.6	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15

1 COUNTRY PROFILE

1.1 MAP AND GENERAL PROFILE¹



Country Name	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
<i>Capital</i>	Riyadh
Geography	
<i>Border countries</i>	Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Yemen
<i>Border waters</i>	Red Sea, Persian Gulf
<i>Area</i>	1,960,582 sq km (roughly the size of western Europe)
<i>Terrain</i>	Sandy desert, largely uninhabited
<i>Climate</i>	Harsh, dry, extremes of temperature, frequent sand and dust storms
People	
<i>Population</i>	22.8 million including 5.4 million foreign nationals ²
<i>Life expectancy</i>	68 years
<i>Ethnic Groups</i>	90% Arab, 10% Afro-Asian
<i>Religions</i>	100% Muslim
<i>Literacy</i> ³	male: 71.5% female: 50.2%
<i>Languages</i>	Arabic

¹ statistics according to The World Factbook, 2001

² July 2001 estimate

³ age 15 and over can read and write

1.1.1 Government

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a Monarchy under King and Prime Minister Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud. The Monarch acts as both the Head of State and the Head of Government. Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, a half-brother to the monarch and heir to the throne since 13 June 1982, has played an increasingly important role in running affairs of the state in recent years, due to the failing health of the King.

The cabinet is formed by a Council of Ministers, appointed by the monarch and includes many family members. There is also a Consultative Council, or *Majlis al Shura*, comprising 90 members (including three Shi'ite Muslims) and a chairman, all appointed by the monarch for a four-year term. The *Majlis* is strictly advisory and is not considered to be a significant political force in the country. Political parties are not permitted.

The Government states that the Constitution is the *Qur'an* but a Basic System of Government⁴ was introduced in 1993, stipulating the government's rights and responsibilities. The legal system is based on *Shari'ah*⁵ law and the judicial branch is overseen by the Supreme Council of Justice.

Saudi Arabia is divided into 13 governorates consisting of *Al Bahah, Al Hudud ash Smaliyah, Al Jawf, Al Madinah, Al Qasim, Ar Riyad, Ash Sharqiyah, Asir, Hail, Jizan, Makkah, Najran, Tabuk*.

1.1.2 Economy

KSA's economy is heavily reliant on oil. Saudi Arabia has the largest reserves of petroleum in the world, approximately 25% of proven reserves. Petroleum and petroleum products account for 90% of export earnings and 40% of GDP. The economy is heavily controlled by the government. In recent years they have sought to encourage private sector growth in an attempt to lessen the Kingdom's dependence on oil and increase employment opportunities. GDP was estimated at \$232 billion in 2000, and GDP per capita at \$10,500. The currency is the Saudi Riyal (SAR).

1.1.3 Military

The military consists of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Air Defence Force, National Guard and the Ministry of Interior Forces (paramilitary), and accounts for 13% of GDP expenditure.

⁴ The Basic System of Government is a Royal Decree which identifies the nature of the state, its goals and responsibilities as well as the relationship between the ruler and citizens.

⁵ Islamic law

1.1.4 International Disputes

A border resolution was agreed with Qatar in March 2001. The location and status of the boundary with the UAE has not been finalised and the de facto boundary reflects a 1974 agreement. In June 2000, a treaty with Yemen delimited the boundary, but final demarcation requires adjustments based on tribal considerations.

1.2 HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The origins of modern-day Saudi Arabia lie with the 18th century puritanical *Wahhabi* movement, which gained the allegiance of the powerful Al Saud family. The present Kingdom was founded by King Abdul Aziz Al Saud in 1932 after a thirty year campaign in which he united the disparate parts of the country by a combination of conquest and diplomacy. Since 1982, the kingdom has been ruled by his son, King Fahd, but when he suffered a stroke in 1995, Crown Prince Abdullah took over as de facto leader.

The discovery of oil in 1937 and its exploitation after the Second World War brought wealth to what had been almost a subsistence economy. The rapid increase in oil prices in 1973 and 1979 gave rise to a construction boom and to massive personal wealth for those involved. It also brought some 6 million foreigners, some of them Christians, to provide the necessary labour force.

Saudi society remains a deeply traditional one in which tribal and family links are of the first importance. It is also very religious and somewhat xenophobic. The ruling family rely on the religious leaders to endorse their legitimacy. They must therefore take full account of any religious angle to a policy decision. In 1995, King Fahd created a Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, composed of royal family members and other appointees, in an effort to establish a counterweight to the Ulemas Council, an advisory body of conservative Muslim theologians.

The trappings of modern life such as mobile phones, satellite TV and computers have so far had only a limited impact on society. The young are less willing to accept parental discipline but the pressures to conform are strong. Meanwhile living standards for the average family are falling steadily as the economy grows more slowly than the rapid growth in population. This is accompanied by a growing problem of youth unemployment which has not been successfully tackled.

No political parties are permitted, nor public meetings unless with special permission. (Soccer matches and the mosque are the only occasions at which a crowd is allowed to gather). The press and television are carefully controlled but those who have satellite dishes can now watch the Al Jazeera channel, which is broadcast from Qatar. There is no pressure for democracy which few Saudis believe would work in Saudi conditions. There is a desire for reform, especially for the suppression of corruption and the improvement of the highly Islamic education system but there is little desire for revolution.

The only potential opposition, therefore, is from Islamic fundamentalists whose main support is thought to be in the central region. In 1979, after the fall of the Shah of Iran, they called for the overthrow of the Saudi government. Two weeks of fighting left over 100 rebels dead, but the movement was crushed. They also objected strongly to the

presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War in 1991 and still oppose their continued military presence in the region. They are sympathetic to Osama bin Laden.

Against this background, the Saudi authorities are extremely cautious about Christian worship. They are prepared to permit it in private and in small numbers but the leaders of larger gatherings are not infrequently arrested by the religious police. After a month or two in jail, in very difficult conditions, they are usually deported. Others have their contracts quietly terminated so that they are obliged to leave. Non Europeans are especially vulnerable to these pressures.

1.3 GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

1.3.1 Thematic concerns

International human rights groups continue to voice their concerns regarding prisoners of conscience, political prisoners, discrimination against women, torture and ill-treatment, judicial corporal punishments, the death penalty, freedom of expression and the press, rights of migrant workers and the restriction of access to the country by non-governmental human rights organisations and independent monitors.⁶

1.3.2 KSA and the United Nations

Saudi Arabia is a member of the United Nations, whose Charter promotes and encourages respect and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion⁷. The Kingdom is obliged by that same charter to take action towards the achievement of these purposes⁸.

Saudi Arabia has acceded to three United Nations Conventions: the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁹, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination¹⁰ and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment¹¹. Last year, Saudi Arabia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against Women¹².

However, Saudi Arabia views the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a document formulated by Western nations and holds that many of these articles do not conform to an Islamic concept of human rights. As one Saudi official put it “*there is no comparison between what has been incorporated in Islam and that*

⁶ for further information, see reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

⁷ Charter of the United Nations, 1945. Articles 3,55

⁸ *Ibid.* Article 56.

⁹ 1996

¹⁰ 1997

¹¹ 1997

¹² 07/09/2000

embedded in the UDHR. What has the ground to do with the Pleiades? Indeed they are totally disproportionate in value.”¹³

At the adoption of the UDHR by UN General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) in December 1948, Saudi Arabia was one of the eight countries which abstained from the vote. In its own words, “*Saudi Arabia does not see fit to accept the latest version of the West’s vision of human rights. Saudi Arabia has its own vision*”¹⁴.

1.4 RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Islam is the official religion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and all citizens must be Muslims. The Government prohibits the public practice of other religions, even by foreign nationals residing in the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia does not have a National Constitution as it regards the Holy Koran and the *Sunna*¹⁵ as sufficient for this purpose. However, the Basic System of Government declares Saudi Arabia to be an Islamic state (Article 1) that depends on the Koran for its definition of law (Article 7). Islamic practice in the Kingdom adheres to Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahab’s (*Wahhabi*) interpretation of the *Hanbali* school of jurisprudence¹⁶ of the Sunni branch of Islam, a particularly strict and conservative form.

Other articles pertaining to religious freedom include Article 13, which states that “*Education aims at the implantation of the Islamic creed in new generations...*” and Article 40, which prohibits interference with communications and “*protects human rights in accordance with Islamic Shari’ah.*” Article 35 ensures that no one will be arrested except by law.

Both atheism and apostasy are punishable by death. The possession of non-Islamic religious objects, including Bibles, religious song books, rosary beads and crosses has often led to arrests.

***1.4.1 Authorities responsible for arrests and monitoring religious practices*¹⁷**

Religious practices are monitored by the *Hay’at al-Amr bil Ma’ruf wa Nahi ‘an al-Munkar*, the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (CPVPV). The CPVPV is thought to have been formed in 1927 when King Abdul al-Aziz Ibn Saud captured Mecca. During the administrative reorganisation of the state during the reign of King Faisal bin Abdul al-Aziz Ibn Saud, the CPVPV became accountable to the Council of Ministers. Members of the CPVPV are responsible for ensuring strict adherence to

¹³ Preface by HE Dr. Abdulla Bin Abdul Mohsin Al Turki, Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance to a book entitled “Human Rights in Islam, and Refutation of the Misconceived Allegation Associated with these Rights” by Suliemen Abdul Rahman Al Hageel, second edition 1999.

¹⁴ Saudi Arabia, Questions of Human Rights. Undated. Provided by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, London. p.3

¹⁵ Literally, the ‘Tradition’, based on the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed.

¹⁶ The other three schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam are Shafi’i, Hanafi and Maliki

¹⁷ see Amnesty International report 1993: MDE 23/06/93 Dis tr: SC/GR/CO

established codes of conduct and are required to have a good knowledge of *Shari'ah* law, although they do not, apparently, receive formal training as law enforcement officials.

The enforcing arm of the CPVPV are known as the *muttawa'een*.¹⁸ They do not have the legal authority to detain anyone beyond 24 hours, after which time they are obliged to hand detainees over to the public security police or *Shurta*. However, this is not always adhered to in practice.

The *Shurta* falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, and has the authority to investigate offences, arrest suspects and refer cases to the courts. It does not appear that *Shurta* officers necessarily require search warrants, making arbitrary arrests and detentions commonplace. Additionally, there does not appear to be an established procedure for notifying a detainee's family, friends, or in the case of foreign nationals, their diplomatic representatives. This can often mean a detainee's whereabouts remains unknown for prolonged periods of time and adds to the risk of torture and ill-treatment.

1.4.2 Government defence of its position on freedom of religion

The KSA regards Islamic *Shari'ah* as a comprehensive system for universal human rights - a system, it says, which is based upon respect for humanity and dignity of mankind, and the source of which is *Allah*, the Creator of the Universe.¹⁹ Therefore, the government does not see the need to accept any other set of universally accepted human rights. Indeed it holds that those who devise man-made laws have committed an injustice.²⁰

*From a pamphlet provided by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Britain*²¹:

Q: *Why is it that Saudi Arabia does not allow the followers of other religions the freedom to practice their faiths in Saudi Arabia?*

A: Anyone in Saudi Arabia is entitled to his own beliefs and practices, But Saudi Arabia cannot allow the public practice of any religion which contradicts Islam. Saudi Arabia is a special place: it is the cradle of Islam and the Prophet Mohamed declared it a preserve of Islam. A lot of the so-called dissidents want all non-Muslims thrown out of Saudi Arabia. But the government takes a far more moderate stance.

Thus, claiming the need for protection from extremists groups, the Saudi government has prevented the free worship of many law-abiding religious organisations.

Q: *But Muslims can practice their faith here in the West with no hindrance. Why doesn't Saudi Arabia reciprocate?*

A: British society is a secular one. A man can worship an insect for all society cares. Saudi Arabia is a religious society, a very religious society. The people believe in the Unity of God and any

¹⁸ Religious police (sing. *muttawah*)

¹⁹ see statement by His Highness Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, June 15, 1993.

²⁰ from a preface written by His Excellency Dr. Abdulla Bin Abdul Mohsin Al Turki, Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance to a book entitled "Human Rights in Islam, and Refutation of the Misconceived Allegation Associated with these Rights" by Suliemen Abdul Rahman Al Hageel, second edition 1999.

²¹ *Op.Cit.* p.9-10.

doctrine contrary to that is not accepted. All Saudis are Muslims, and non-Muslims who come temporarily to work in Saudi Arabia should understand this fact. In Israel you can go to jail if you start a missionary activity. And the Vatican does not encourage the building of mosques inside it. Mecca and the surrounding land of Saudi Arabia is the holiest preserve of Islam. There should be adequate allowance made for these special cases.

The KSA therefore justifies its policy by an argument based on the intolerance of some of its own citizens, and by the claim that Saudi Arabia's position at the heart of Islam is unique such as to exempt it from the norms of religious tolerance applicable elsewhere in the world.

1.4.3 Statements made by KSA Government officials

1.4.3.1 To the UN Commission on Human Rights by His Highness Prince Turki Mohammed Saud Al-Kabeer.²²

...Regulations currently in force in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia grant equal rights to citizens and foreign residents. They do not prohibit exercise of freedom of expression and assembly provided that this is neither prejudicial to public order nor detrimental to public morals

...Tolerance, including religious tolerance, is a fundamental requirement for the achievement of more effective protection of human rights

... Non-Muslim as well as all Muslim residents of the Kingdom enjoy all the basic rights and freedoms guaranteed to them in the relevant articles of the Basic System of Government.

...Non-Muslims enjoy full freedom to engage in their religious observances in private. No non-Muslims have ever been subjected to prosecution or punishment because of their religious faith and it is a punishable offence to subject them to any interference or harassment

...The regulations in force in the Kingdom protect human rights and strictly prohibit the practice of any form of torture, the perpetrators of which are liable to punishment...

1.4.3.2 Interview with Al-Hayat Newspaper, 1997

In an interview with the Saudi-owned, London-based *Al-Hayat* newspaper, Prince Sultan Bin-Abd-al-Aziz Al Sa'ud, Minister for Defence and Aviation and Inspector-General and Second Deputy Prime Minister, was quoted as saying that Saudi Arabia has no objection to non-Muslims practicing their faiths in the privacy of their homes.²³

However, despite these repeated verbal assurances guaranteeing the freedom of religious worship in private, Christian fellowships meeting in private homes throughout the country continue to be raided by state and religious police.

²² From a statement made by His Highness Prince Turki Mohammed Saud Al-Kabeer Undersecretary for Political Affairs and Director-General for International Organisations, at the 56th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, 6 April 2000.

²³ Report by Reuters, published in the Bahrain Tribune, Issue 201, 25 September 1997

1.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The government of Saudi Arabia appears to be treading a fine line between appeasing devout and often extreme Sunni Muslim citizens and clerics and maintaining fruitful diplomatic relations with Western states, particularly the USA. Since the September 11th attacks on America, this fine line has become even more difficult to walk as the anti-western, anti-Christian and anti-Jewish rhetoric of bin Laden has struck a chord with many (particularly young) Saudis.

The current political climate has thus made conditions still more difficult for Christians and other non-Muslims in Saudi Arabia. The authorities will not want to display any further signs of sympathy to other religious persuasions, particularly Christians, for fear of domestic opinion. Meanwhile, the USA and Britain will avoid embarrassing the Saudis by raising religious liberty issues for fear of alienating a strategic ally.

2 REVIEW OF 2001

2.1 SUMMARY

CSW received reports of the arrest and detention of 22 Christians in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the period covered by this report. All 22 were male foreign nationals, nine of whom were Filipino, eight Ethiopian, one Indian, one Nigerian and three Eritrean. CSW believes all were prisoners of conscience, being held solely in connection with their religious beliefs.

The men were not formally charged and as far as we know, none stood before a court. In at least 19 cases consular access was denied throughout their detention in prison.

Three men were forced to sign false confessions. One man was released after allegedly agreeing to convert to Islam. Three detainees were beaten with rods during their detention. A further three men received 80 lashes each whilst held in a deportation centre. One man was hospitalised and lay in a coma for at least two days as a result of the poor detention conditions and a possible beating.

Of those who have been released to date, all except four are known to have been repatriated.

Three men remain incarcerated, 2 in Jiddah and one in an unknown location.²⁴

2.2 DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL CASES

2.2.1 Lunch meeting raided, December 2000.

Twelve Filipino Christians who were meeting for lunch on December 8th, 2000 at a private residence in Riyadh were interrupted by Saudi authorities and six were taken into custody.

Two were released later the same day, followed by a third soon afterwards.

The remaining three, Jose Garcia, an employee of the Royal Saudi Air force, Riyadh; Ernesto Miranda, employee of JS Jewellery, Riyadh; and Marlon Blando, an employee of the Diplomatic Quarter Maintenance Dept, Riyadh remained incarcerated.

The three were allegedly made to sign Arabic documents, which they were unable to read, confessing that they had committed crimes.

Garcia and Blando were released on January 30th 2001 and were later deported. As far as CSW is aware, Ernesto Miranda continues to be held. A source said “there are other charges against him”.

²⁴ 28 February 2002

2.2.2 Raul Macatunao, April 2001

Filipino Christian, Raul Macatunao, 44, was arrested on April 20th in Jiddah when police found religious material in his car. Macatunao was driving home from a Christian fellowship meeting when police found a bible and songbooks in his car. Macatunao was detained for two days at Sharafiah prison before being released.

On July 28th, Raul was unexpectedly called to Sharafiah prison once more. This time he was accompanied by his employer's liaison officer. The authorities at the prison ordered the men to go to the Immigration Office to receive instructions for Macatunao's deportation.

He was allegedly accused of propagating Christianity in the Kingdom and was given until the end of August to settle his affairs and leave.

2.2.3 Wilfredo Caliuag, July 2001

Wilfredo Caliuag, a Filipino resident of Jiddah was arrested on July 5th on trumped up charges of the illegal use of an alias. Wilfredo was a member of an underground Christian fellowship, which met privately in homes in the city. According to an eye-witness, Wilfredo's arrest was facilitated by a Filipino Muslim informer.

Wilfredo was detained for over a month, during which time he was interrogated in order to extract information about the leaders and structure of the underground church in the city. The conditions inside the detention cells were poor. Wilfredo complained of severe heat and no medicines were provided to treat skin conditions from which he suffered. Two inmates died in the cells during the time Wilfredo was incarcerated, but CSW has no further information on these individuals at this time.

On 31st July, Wilfredo was admitted to the Central Intensive Care Unit of the Red Sea King Abdul Aziz Hospital where friends who visited him found him lying in a coma. Clinical records reported that Wilfredo had suffered severe heat stroke and a nurse reported bruising. Wilfredo recovered from the coma on August 2nd and was deported on August 9th.

2.2.4 15 Arrests in Jiddah, July-September 2001

Over the summer months of 2001, 14 Christians, all foreign residents of the Kingdom, were arrested and detained in connection with their Christian beliefs.

The arrests began with Mr Prabhu Isaac, an Indian national, on July 19th when his home was raided by religious police late at night. The remaining 13 were arrested in the ensuing weeks up until the 4th of September. Of the 14, an Ethiopian known only by his first name, Tishome, was released after allegedly agreeing to convert to Islam. A fifteenth man, Suleiman Keder, also from Ethiopia, was reportedly mistaken for a Christian by the Saudi Arabian authorities and detained along with the others.

It is thought that the spate of arrests may have been triggered by a farewell party held in honour of Mr Isaac, who was due to leave the Kingdom for good in July this year after 17 years of service. It is reported that Christian songs were sung at the gathering as part of the farewell tribute to Mr Isaac, which was held in a rented public hall. There have also been reports that Saudi nationals may have been present at the party and it is feared that the arrests may have been part of an attempt to track down any Saudi nationals with Christian sympathies.

In a related development, according to news agency Compass Direct, a British citizen employed in Jiddah was fired by his company on August 1st, two weeks after Isaac's arrest. His company refused to explain the reason for the sudden termination of his contract which had been renewed in June for a further two years.

But before his departure, an acquaintance in the security police allegedly told the Briton that his dismissal had been demanded by the authorities on the basis of a video confiscated from Isaac's home which showed the Englishman preaching.

The 14 detainees in Jiddah comprised Indian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Nigerian and Filipino nationals.²⁵ The men were not formally charged and were denied consular access until they were transferred to a deportation centre. Some of the men were allowed to receive visits from their wives. Three were beaten with rods on one occasion during the interrogations, but otherwise reports of conditions in the prison were generally acceptable.

On December 24, nine of the prisoners were transferred to Trahyl deportation centre in the old Jiddah airport. The remaining five were transferred on January 2. Sources in Jiddah reported appalling conditions to CSW. "Rain is seeping into the cells, food and leftovers are served from one cooking pot which is never cleaned, toilet facilities are flooded and the cells are overcrowded," a source said.

Thirteen of the detainees were transferred once again to Breman Deportation centre on January 8. The remaining man, Ismail Abubaker, or "Worku", was transferred the same day to a prison near Mecca, apparently to be near his employer to resolve outstanding paperwork.

On January 28, three Ethiopians, Bahru Mengistu, Tinsaie Gezechew and Gabayu Tefera were suspended with chains and flogged 80 times with a flexible metal cable, kicked and beaten in front of other deportees in the Breman centre. The apparent reason for the flogging was a complaint made by another individual. Mengistu's kidney may have been damaged as he was subsequently passing blood in his urine. When they reported to available medical services they were turned backed. Mengistu was finally treated in Ethiopia after he had been deported.

²⁵ See Appendix A for a full listing.

Deportations began on January 12 with the departure of Kebrom Haile. A further eleven men were deported periodically throughout January and February. At the end of February, two men, Dennis Moreno and Ismail Abubaker were still awaiting deportation.

2.3 CSW ACTION

2.3.1 Prayer

CSW alerted prayer networks in all four cases at the request of sources close to the individuals concerned.

2.3.2 Information sharing

CSW briefed the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, other European Union Foreign Ministries, British and European Parliamentarians, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union.

CSW passed on information to other human rights organisations where appropriate.

2.3.3 Publicity

Where appropriate²⁶, CSW issued press releases to the Christian, regional, national and international press and submitted feature stories to selected magazines and newspapers. CSW staff members conducted radio interviews. CSW also ran features in *Response*, its bi-monthly magazine.

2.3.4 Campaigning initiatives

CSW approached senior, respected individuals to ask them to write private letters to the Saudi Arabian authorities, requesting the release of the Jiddah 14. In the past, this discreet approach has often proved influential.

CSW later received requests for further advocacy and publicity on the Jiddah case. CSW thus embarked upon a more public campaign strategy, canvassing its supporters to write letters of protest to the Saudi Arabian authorities and to the Chairman of the European Parliament Delegation to the Mashreq Countries and the Gulf, Michel Dary, MEP. A further request was issued, asking supporters to appeal to His Majesty King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to include the prisoners in Jiddah in the traditional Ramadan pardon.

2.4 RESPONSES FROM THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT

CSW has, to date,²⁷ only received a copy of one response from the Saudi Arabian authorities. This was a short reply to a private letter stating that the case of the 13 remaining prisoners in Jiddah would receive due attention.

²⁶ In the case of Saudi Arabia, too much publicity can often result in negative consequences for the victims and their friends/families. CSW's policy in 2001 was to issue press releases only after victims had left KSA except in the case of the Jiddah 14, where the detainees and their families specifically requested publicity.

²⁷ 28 February 2002

According to news agency, Middle East Newsline, Saudi Arabia refused a US appeal to release the Christians incarcerated in Jiddah.²⁸

CSW continues to welcome plans initially unveiled by Saudi Arabian representatives at the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2000, for the creation of governmental and non-governmental bodies to examine human rights issues.

2.5 CONCLUSIONS

CSW remains disturbed at the evident lack of religious freedom in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It deplores the ongoing arbitrary arrests and detention of Christian believers, the mistreatment of detainees, denial of consular and legal access, denial of the right to be defended by a lawyer, absence of fair court proceedings and the general lack of judicial procedures. CSW is further gravely concerned by evidence suggesting that prisoners could be released on the condition that they recant their Christian faith and convert to Islam.

2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

CSW calls on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

- To safeguard the freedom of all people resident in the Kingdom to worship according to their professed religion in the privacy of their own homes, as publicly guaranteed by senior Saudi officials;
- To bring to an end the arbitrary arrests of peaceful, law-abiding residents on account of their faith;
- To grant access to human rights reporters from international and non-governmental organisations, in particular to extend an invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance to visit the country in order to examine and report on conditions of religious freedom;

CSW calls upon the United Nations to urge the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

- To respect and uphold Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, of which it is a member;
- To uphold all tenets of religious freedom in its role as a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights²⁹;
- To accede to and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights.

²⁸ MENL, 7 December 2001

²⁹ Saudi Arabia became a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights in May 2000

Further CSW Reports on Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: A Catalogue of Religious Intolerance Towards Christians 1987-2001;17p

Acknowledgements:

CSW would like to thank Compass Direct, Middle East Concern and countless individuals in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere for the provision of accurate and timely information and for their tireless commitment to the suffering church and others.

AP/02/02

APPENDIX A

List of Christians Arrested, Detained, Deported in Saudi Arabia Covered in this Report

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Date Arrested</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
1.	Raul Macatunao	Filipino	April 20 th	2001	rd?
2.	Wilfredo Caliuag	Filipino	July 9 th	2001	rd 9/8/01
3.	Prabhu Isaac	Indian	July 19 th	2001	rd 7/2/02
4.	Eskinder Menghis	Eritean	July 25 th	2001	rd 18/1/02
5.	Gabayu Tefera (Ibrahim Mohamed)	Ethiopian	August 19 th	2001	rd 7/2/02
6.	Kebrom Haile	Eritrean	August 19 th	2001	rd 12/1/02
7.	Tinsaie Gizachew	Ethiopian	August 19 th	2001	rd 14/2/02
8.	Afobunor Okey Buliamin	Nigerian	August 19 th	2001	rd 18/1/02
9.	Mesfin Berhanu (Mubarak Husein)	Ethiopian	August 19 th	2001	rd 18/1/02
10.	Bahru Mengistu	Ethiopian	August 19 th /20 th	2001	rd 2/2/02
11.	Beferdu Fikri	Ethiopian	August 21 st	2001	rd 26/1/02
12.	Joseph Girmaye	Eritrean	August 29 th	2001	rd 26/1/02
13.	Dennis Raymund Lacalle	Filipino	August 29 th	2001	h
14.	Ismail Abubaker, "Worku"	Ethiopian	September 1 st	2001	h
15.	Tishome (last name not known)	Ethiopian	September 1 st	2001	r
16.	Genet Haileab (Araya Gesesew)	Ethiopian	September 3 rd /4 th	2001	rd 18/1/02
17.	Jose Garcia	Filipino	December 8 th	2000	r 30/1/01 d
18.	Ernesto Miranda	Filipino	December 8 th	2000	h?
19.	Marlon Blando	Filipino	December 8 th	2000	r 30/1/01 d
20.	?	Filipino	December 8 th	2000	r 8/12/01
21.	?	Filipino	December 8 th	2000	r 8/12/01
22.	?	Filipino	December 8 th	2000	r

NB:

- Suleiman Keder, an Ethiopian Muslim, was also detained during the spate of arrests in Jiddah. He was allegedly mistaken for a Christian by the Saudi Arabian authorities. Keder was arrested and taken to Sharafiya prison on September 1, 2001. He was transferred to Trahyl deportation centre on January 2 and to Breman deportation centre on January 8. He was deported on January 18.
- Tishome was released after allegedly converting to Islam.

Key to **Outcome** Column:
 r = released
 d = deported
 h = detained
 ? = unconfirmed
 dates are given where known