

“Saudi Human Rights Record is the Worst in the Region: One Beheading Every Four Days”

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As long as Saudi oil is seen as a valuable resource for US oil corporations, the US will maintain relations with the feudal regime regardless of what that means for the rights of Saudi people, Sara Flounders, of the International Action Center, told RT.

RT: Time to time we hear about executions and human rights violations in Saudi Arabia. How do you see the situation the country at the moment?

Sara Flounders: Saudi Arabia from the very beginning has had a very special relationship with the US based on oil, based on huge military support for a completely corrupt feudal regime. The punishment, the absence of any rights for the people go hand and hand. It is not covered here and it should be known because there is one beheading on average every four days in Saudi Arabia, it is so common. Along with other horrendous forms of punishment, of course the beheadings are absolutely outrageous, offensive around the world, [there's] great outrage when it is carried out by ISIS, but when it's done in Saudi Arabia it's not even publicized. And other punishments, to sentence someone to [1000 lashes](#), that is almost a death sentence. It is so horrendously torturous. And these are common punishments in Saudi Arabia.



Saad al-Hariri (R), son of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri, with other Saudi royal family members (Reuters / Hamad I Mohammed)

It is important to know that women have absolutely no rights in Saudi Arabia: not to work, not to drive, not to have any funds of their own, not to travel, not to step foot out of the house without the permission and accompaniment of a male family member. The immigrants have no rights whatsoever in Saudi Arabia. Although that's a third of the population, doing everything from the highest level technical jobs to the lowest level housekeeping, garbage, and so on.

At every level Saudi Arabia is dependent on these foreign work force, and this woman is from Burma, I don't know her exact circumstances, but certainly as a woman and as a non-Saudi, as an immigrant she would be absent any kind of appeal or rights. And otherwise there are no rights, there is no appeal within Saudi Arabia even for the Saudis. There is a great deal of poverty although there is extreme wealth. There is an enormous amount, the highest in Arab world, of illiteracy in Saudi Arabia and this is what unending US military support has meant to the population of Saudi Arabia.

RT: We know about Saudi's close ties with the US. Why does the US support such a cruel regime and at the same time in the past influenced overthrows of many other less brutal regimes in the Mideast? Why don't we hear at least of US disapproval of the executions, etc?



Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud (R) listens to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry before a meeting at the Royal Palace in Jeddah (Reuters / Brendan Smialowski / Pool)

SF: The whole regime is a feudal regime. Back to US support, the largest number of people facing execution in the world right is here in the US. The use of lethal injection and electrocution has also been found to be excruciatingly painful. The last couple of lethal injection executions in the US turned out to be completely botched and a great torture, great torment to those facing execution.

So there is no good way to kill people, but the Saudi form because of the outrage that it raised when it was carried out when the US wanted to whip up its right to bomb, strafe, and use cluster bombs, white phosphorus and horrendous forms which are also torturous and deadly against ISIS. Then they made much of the decapitation, the execution of two journalists. They made no mention of how routine this is in Saudi Arabia, where they plan to train what they say are their new forces to be used in Syria. That is very interesting that Saudi Arabia would be heading up a UN sponsored counter terrorism conference, where Saudi Arabia would be chosen for the training of forces to go into Syria. Yet, their own record is the worst in the region.



Members of Magic Movement, a group of young Bangladeshis, stage a mock execution scene in protest of Saudi Arabia beheading of eight Bangladeshi workers in front of National Museum in Dhaka (Reuters / Andrew Biraj)

RT: *How do you see this recent horrible “blogger” case? What was the US reaction?*

SF: First of all, the blogger who was charged, committed no crime, this is a thought crime, a violation of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to put forth ideas. And for that he is facing 1000 lashes, carried out 50 at a time because that is all that a human being could bear and live. So this means this excruciating torture will take place over many, many months again and again. It is absolutely inhuman, a degrading form of punishment and intended to be that.

It is so well and good for US senators to call for the end of flogging, but really they should call for an end to the support of this corrupt Royal family who are named the House of Saud, they have named the very country after themselves, expropriated its entire wealth, is in the hands of this one clan, this one grouping. And the rest of the population has no rights whatsoever.

It is held in place in a straightjacket by US support, financial support, technical support, and every way military support, especially because Saudi Arabian oil is considered an extremely valuable resource and contracts favor US oil corporations. They want to keep that relationship regardless of what that means for human rights, for millions of people in Saudi Arabia.

RT: *How should US senators act in your opinion?*

SF: I think that the senators...are asking to put a good face on a totally rotten situation. Really they should call for a break and end to all support for this Saudi regime. It will

collapse tomorrow; it has existed by totally repressing the entire population and acting as a police force in the whole region. Also constantly arming and fomenting the most reactionary jihadist forces throughout the region.

RT: *Is there any chance of changing the situation within Saudi Arabia?*

SF: Because the oppression is so harsh, so extreme – immediate execution – the very idea of trying to unionize or organize in any way whatsoever is punishable by death. As we can see even writing something in anyway critical of the regime – 1000 lashes is a penalty. In Saudi Arabia, the royal family keeps their position of total power by mass terror, and they have brutally put down in the past any kind and every kind of resistance. This is not in any way a democratic regime and it's far harsher even than military dictatorships that are known around the world. This is really a form of terror against the whole population.

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