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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell
on behalf of the European Commission
(7.4.2021)

The EU is aware of the statement mentioned by the Honourable Member. The EU has not shied away from raising its concerns in the field of human rights in Saudi Arabia both through its dialogue with the Saudi authorities and in multilateral fora, including at the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

With regard to the latest developments related to the case of Ms Loujain al-Hathloul, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights has been in regular contact with the Saudi Human Rights Commission, seeking her release. The EU Delegation in Riyadh has attended the hearings of the trial to show EU interest and concern over her situation, but they were not allowed into the courtroom. The EU issued a statement¹ on 29 December 2020 following her sentencing, and continues to liaise closely with her family. The concerning situation of Ms Samar Badawi and her brother, the 2015 Sakharov Prize laureate Raif Badawi, have equally been raised repeatedly by the EU with the Saudi authorities.

In parallel, and in close coordination with EU Member States, the EU is seeking to strengthen its dialogue with Riyadh on human rights-related matters. As part of these efforts, the EU engaged with the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs during his latest visit to Brussels², as well as with the Chairman of the Saudi Human Rights Commission and the Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/91059/Saudi%20Arabia:%20Statement%20by%20the%20Spokesperson%20on%20the%20case%20of%20Loujain%20al-Hathloul

² https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/86039/saudi-arabia-high-representativevice-president-borrell-meets-foreign-minister-faisal-bin_en