

## **Organization for Defending Victims of Violence**

### **Shia Minority in Saudi Arabia**



#### **Mr. President,**

The Shia in Saudi Arabia are constantly treated as second class citizens. They are not permitted to express their religion openly and cannot hold their religious services in public places. In Medina, their mosques and Hosseniehs have been destroyed. Furthermore, the Saudi government continually restricts the Shia from civil and political participation. Currently there are no top Shia diplomats or military officials in the country.

Attempts to forcefully convert the Shia to Sunni is another case of blatant violation of the freedom of religion and belief as stated in international documents. Since in 1997 Saudi Arabia joined the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, but the government practices are contrary to the international obligations.

#### **Mr. President,**

Expressing serious concern about the situation of Shia in Saudi Arabia, the Organisation for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV):

1. Calls on the international community, particularly the Human Rights Council to provide short term solutions for improving the conditions of Shia in the country so that they enjoy their fundamental rights.
2. Calls on the Saudi government to officially recognise freedoms of the Shia minority in the country that include making a living and holding religious ceremonies.
3. Calls on the Saudi officials to seriously refrain from discriminatory remarks and thus igniting hatred against minorities especially the Shia in the country.
4. Calls on the United Nations Human Rights Council special procedures to address the situation of Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia and report any positive or negative developments to the international community.