

**54th session of the Human Rights Council**  
**Item 3: interactive dialogue with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary**  
**Disappearances**

Mr. President,

Right Livelihood, ALQST for Human Rights and MENA Rights Group thank the Working Group for their report.

We remain greatly alarmed by the widespread practice of enforced disappearance in Saudi Arabia as part of the authorities' extreme repression of peaceful dissent.

Last November, human rights defender Mohammed al-Qahtani completed his 10-year sentence on politically motivated charges. Since October 24, 2022, he has been forcibly disappeared. His family has been denied any contact with him, and authorities have attempted to threaten them into silence. While the Saudi authorities claim he remains behind bars for additional crimes, they have failed to communicate his trial dates and prohibited him from seeking legal assistance. Nothing justifies *incommunicado* detention. Yet, his case is just one of many.

In 2020, the Working Group denounced in a general allegation the clear trend of both short and long-term enforced disappearances in Saudi Arabia, made possible by a lack of criminalisation of the practice, and often coupled with torture. To date, the authorities have failed to respond.

While Saudi Arabia continues its elimination of civic space unabated, we deplore that several States are increasingly rehabilitating its leaders. This only legitimises the authorities' tactics of repression. Hence, we reiterate our calls on the Council to hold Saudi Arabia accountable for its human rights abuses and urge its authorities to (1) Cease its persecution of peaceful activists, including the use of enforced disappearances, (2) Immediately provide information on the fate and whereabouts of those forcibly disappeared and (3) Unconditionally release all human rights defenders arbitrarily detained.

Thank you.