

**JOINT STATEMENT ON CANADA'S SUPPORT
FOR WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN SAUDI ARABIA**

Ottawa—August 9, 2018

The undersigned organizations express our support to Canada for its recent position on the detention of women human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia. We join Canada in urging Saudi Arabia to release women's rights activists Samar Badawi and Nassima al-Sada, and commend Minister Freeland for her uncompromising stand for human rights, and for her bold leadership in walking the talk on women's rights globally.

The detention of Samar Badawi and Nassima al-Sada is part of a larger crackdown on civil society and women activists in Saudi Arabia. As reported by Amnesty International, an increasing [number of leading women's rights activists and campaigners](#) have recently been arbitrarily detained for their peaceful human rights work, including Loujain al-Hathloul, Iman al-Nafjan and Aziza al-Yousef — all leading advocates against Saudi Arabia's driving ban and repressive guardianship system for women.

Saudi Arabia has a history of silencing vocal human rights activists. Measures taken by the Saudi Arabian government have included arbitrary detention, restrictions on the rights of women and travel bans on activists. These tactics of intimidation and harassment violate international human rights.

We reiterate our call on Saudi Arabia to immediately release activists Samar Badawi and Nassima al-Sada, and all women's rights activists currently in detention.

We urge the international community to join Canada in calling for the unequivocal respect of women's rights in Saudi Arabia.

Signatories:

Canada-based Organizations

Nobel Women's Initiative
Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)
Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Oxfam Canada
Oxfam Quebec
Inter Pares
Association Québécoise des Organismes de Coopération Internationale (AQOCI)
The MATCH International Women's Fund
National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL)
Avocats Sans Frontières - Canada / Lawyers without Borders- Canada
Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers
British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)
United Nations Association in Canada
International Women's Rights Project (IWRP)
Institute for International Women's Right-Manitoba (IIWR-M)
Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN)
Voices - Voix
Women Help Women
Amnesty International – Canada
Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies
United Steelworkers

U.S and Global Organizations

Human Rights Watch
Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
Outright Action International
MADRE
Global Justice Center
Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights
Women's Refugee Commission

Individuals

Isabelle Martin, Associate professor, University of Montreal
Mary Scott, member - Women, Peace and Security Network - Canada
Georgina Bencsik, member - Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada