



RIGHT TO LIFE
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

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September 24, 2026

Press Statement: Urgent Appeal for High-Level Diplomatic Intervention to Secure Executive Clemency for Sri Lankan Citizen in Saudi Arabia

The Right to Life Human Rights Centre(R2L) urgently calls upon the President of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to initiate immediate, high-level executive diplomacy to save the life of Anojan, a young Sri Lankan migrant worker currently facing execution in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Supreme Court has affirmed a death sentence against Anojan regarding a social media comment a statement that the youth immediately regretted, retracted, and for which he issued a swift public apology. As a committed partner of international and local networks against the death penalty, R2L recognizes the extreme urgency of this situation and the notoriously unforgiving nature of judicial timelines in capital cases abroad.

Within the Saudi legal hierarchy, a unanimous affirmation of a death sentence by the Supreme Court signifies the end of the formal judicial appeals process. Legal technicalities and standard representations are no longer sufficient. The sole remaining legal recourse to halt this execution is Executive Clemency in the form of a Royal Pardon, which falls under the exclusive authority of His Majesty the King and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.

The primary constitutional responsibility of the Sri Lankan state is the defense of the lives of its citizens. This crisis must be immediately elevated far beyond routine consular assistance.

R2L urges the Sri Lankan government to launch a concerted diplomatic initiative, supported by bilateral partnerships and established migrant welfare frameworks, to appeal to the Saudi leadership. This diplomatic intervention must emphasize the following critical points:

- **Immediate Retraction and Remorse:** The youth demonstrated clear and immediate remorse by removing the controversial statement almost immediately after posting it and issuing a sincere public apology.
- **Universal Human Rights Principles:** In alignment with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), capital punishment should be reserved strictly for the "most serious crimes" involving intentional killing, rather than speech-based offenses.
- **Appeals to Core Islamic Values:** Sri Lanka's diverse Muslim leadership, civil society, and clergy stand united in advocating for mercy and clemency on Anojan's behalf, appealing directly to the foundational Islamic values of *Afw* (عفو - Forgiveness/Pardon) and *Rahmah* (رحمة - Mercy/Compassion).

Over a million Sri Lankans currently work in the Middle East, generating billions of dollars in vital remittances that sustain our national economy. When our vulnerable migrant workers face



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the ultimate penalty in foreign jurisdictions, the state must act swiftly and decisively to protect them through focused bilateral diplomacy. R2L stands ready to support state efforts in this urgent mission to secure Anojan's life and protect the dignity of the Sri Lankan diaspora.

-Right to life Human Rights Centre-