

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 30, 2020

Berit Reiss-Anderson
Chair
Nobel Peace Prize Committee
NO-0255 Oslo, Norway

Dear Chair Reiss-Anderson and Members of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee:

We, the undersigned members of the United States Congress, respectfully nominate imprisoned women's rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul to receive the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her great personal courage and her tremendous effects on the struggle for equal rights for women in Saudi Arabia and the region. She paved the way for crucial social reforms enacted by the Saudi government in the past two years, including the lifting of the ban on driving for women and the loosening of the male guardianship system.

Ms. al-Hathloul is one of the leaders of the Saudi feminist movement and has been publicly engaged in raising awareness and popularizing human rights concepts in general. As part of the "Together We Stand to End Male Guardianship" and "Women Demand the Overthrow of Guardianship" campaigns, Ms. al-Hathloul has advocated against Saudi Arabia's ban on female drivers, the Saudi male guardianship system, and domestic violence. She has advanced her cause by raising awareness online, sharing information, supporting international human rights monitors, and conducting peaceful protests by driving despite the ban.


She has done this at great cost to herself and her well-being. Ms. al-Hathloul has never used a pseudonym, a current practice to avoid reprisal. She prefers to be visible, leading other women and young girls to identify themselves in her and join the movement for social change. As a result of her rejection of anonymity, the Saudi government has repeatedly targeted Ms. al-Hathloul for her activism. She was arrested in December 2014 for attempting to drive across the border from the United Arab Emirates to Saudi Arabia and again in June 2017 on unspecified charges. In March 2018, she was forcibly removed from the United Arab Emirates to Saudi Arabia and detained for several days.


Ms. al-Hathloul has been held without trial since she was most recently arrested in a May 2018 crackdown that imprisoned at least a dozen women's rights activists. The government initiated a misinformation and propaganda campaign immediately after the arrest of Ms. al-Hathloul and her fellow activists. Local newspapers referred to the women as "traitors;" pro-government Twitter accounts used similar language. During her detention, Ms. al-Hathloul was repeatedly tortured by Saudi officials, who whipped, beat, electrocuted, and sexually harassed her. In August 2019, Saudi State Security officials offered to release her if she recorded a video denying that she had been tortured. She refused this offer. As a result, she currently remains imprisoned without a trial date.


Ms. al-Hathloul is deserving of the Committee's recognition in 2020 because she embodies the peaceful struggle for the equal rights of women in Saudi Arabia. We encourage and appreciate the committee's full consideration of Ms. al-Hathloul's nomination to receive the 2020 Peace Prize.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress


Lois Frankel
Member of Congress


André Carson
Member of Congress


Susan Wild
Member of Congress


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Juan Vargas
Member of Congress


Steve Cohen
Member of Congress


Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress