

# United States Senate

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December 5, 2008

His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud  
c/o Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
601 New Hampshire Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Your Excellency,

As the Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Central Asian Affairs, I wish to extend my greetings and good wishes during Islam's four sacred months.

Today I write to draw your attention to the situation facing many Somalis currently in Saudi Arabia. These immigrants have fled a country where there is no functioning government, where violence rages, and humanitarian needs are great.

Specifically, I am concerned about both the humanitarian conditions facing Somalis currently in Saudi Arabia, as well as their fate if forcibly returned to Somalia during these difficult times.

Through my contacts with the Somali community of Minnesota, home to the largest number of Somali immigrants in the U.S., I have been made aware that a plane of Somali deportees recently landed at the Mogadishu airport. Further, I have been informed that many more Somalis are currently being detained in various jails in Saudi Arabia while en route to Somalia, including a number of mothers with children. I am concerned about reports of poor conditions in these facilities.

As you know, protecting the refugees and safeguarding their needs is aligned with international law. Respectfully, I ask you to consider halting deportations to Somalia so long as the country remains dangerous and unstable. I also request that you look into improvements to the detention facilities where these individuals are being held.

Your Excellency, I deeply appreciate the steps that your government has taken to support the reconciliation of the Somali people. I urge you to continue your support for peace in Somalia and an alleviation of the humanitarian crisis there.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,



Norm Coleman