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## **BULGARIA FACES BACKLASH FOR DEPORTATION ORDER AGAINST SAUDI DISSIDENT**

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Reports emerge from Sofia indicating that Bulgaria intends to deport a Saudi dissident who sought asylum but was rejected, sparking concerns for his safety upon return to the Gulf kingdom. The news, reported by AFP, sheds light on the plight of Abdulrahman Al-Khalidi, who fears persecution in Saudi Arabia if deported.

Al-Khalidi, speaking from his cell in Sofia, revealed that he received the deportation order on February 7, even before his asylum case reached a conclusion. This move has raised alarms among human rights advocates, with Mary Lawlor, the UN's special rapporteur on human rights defenders, deeming his imminent deportation "extremely disturbing" and underscoring Saudi Arabia's reputation as a "dangerous place."

The journey of Abdulrahman Al-Khalidi dates back to 2011 when he participated in demonstrations in eastern Saudi Arabia, predominantly inhabited by the Shiite minority. Fleeing to Turkey in 2013, he eventually found himself in Bulgaria in 2021, seeking refuge within the European Union after his passport expired.

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