

## **Saudi opposition calls for minister to be tried**

---

**Reuters** - 06 May, 2007

Opposition figures in Saudi Arabia have issued a public call for Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz to face trial for suspected rights abuses.

A letter sent to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz late last month and made public this week accuses the prince, one of the most powerful Saudi royals, of creating a "culture of fear" and a "police state" that prevents political reforms.

There is almost no chance of the minister facing legal action, but the unusual call reflects growing disillusion with slow progress on promised reforms. King Abdullah, a half-brother of Prince Nayef who came to power in 2005, is seen as a supporter of gradual reforms.

The letter accused the interior ministry of relying solely on security measures to tackle militant violence by al Qaeda sympathisers, and "supporting a distorted religious discourse that hurts citizenship, pluralism and tolerance". "We ask for the issue of human rights to be opened (for debate) and the prosecution of the interior minister," it said, listing a series of alleged abuses. "We ask for these accusations to be heard in an open court."