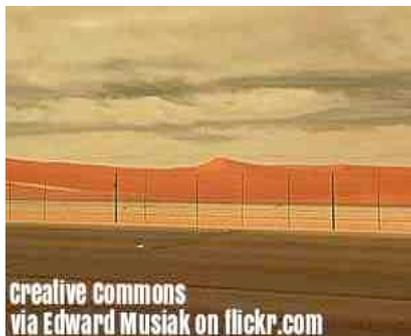


## Iran and Saudi Arabia in war of words

6th January, 2016



A war of words has broken out between Iran and Saudi Arabia following the execution of a religious figure by Saudi authorities on Saturday. The Shia Muslim cleric Sheikh Nimr al-

Nimr was among 47 men the Saudi Arabian government put to death on terrorism charges. Saudi leaders said Mr al-Nimr had led anti-government protests in the east of the country in 2011-2012. He was previously convicted of disobedience and of bearing arms. Al-Nimr maintained he never carried weapons or called for violence but had encouraged Shia Muslims to resist police bullets using "the roar of the word" instead. Iran's leaders said al-Nimr was killed for being a Shia Muslim. Saudi Arabia is a largely Sunni Muslim country.

Protests against the execution took place in the Iranian capital Teheran on Sunday. Demonstrators stormed the Saudi Arabian embassy and set parts of it on fire. Iran's foreign ministry said Saudi Arabia would pay a "heavy price" for the execution, including the possible downfall of its government. The Saudi government said Iran had no right to create tensions and said the execution was an internal Saudi matter. The foreign ministry said the killing of Mr al-Nimr had nothing to do with his being a Shia Muslim. It said: "There is no difference between what a person does regardless of his ethnic origin or affiliation, or what he believes. We deal with facts and criminal intent."

Sources: *al-Jazeera.com / GulfNews.com / HuffingtonPost*

## Writing

How dangerous is the war of words between Iran and Saudi Arabia? Why do you think so?

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*war / words / religious / terrorism / protests / disobedience / violence / police bullets / capital / embassy / pay a heavy price / create tensions / foreign ministry / criminal*

## True / False

- The article says Iran has declared war on Saudi Arabia. T / F
- Besides Nimr al-Nimr, Saudi Arabia put to death another 46 men. T / F
- Nimr al-Nimr had never been convicted of any wrongdoing before. T / F
- The article says Saudi is the world's largest Sunni Muslim country. T / F
- Protestors in Tehran set fire to the Saudi embassy. T / F
- Iran asked Saudi Arabia for a lot of money because of an execution. T / F
- Saudi Arabia told Iran the execution was an internal matter. T / F
- Saudi Arabia said the execution was not because of religion. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. broken out | a. attacked      |
| 2. execution  | b. carrying      |
| 3. charges    | c. affair        |
| 4. bearing    | d. predominantly |
| 5. largely    | e. potential     |
| 6. stormed    | f. started       |
| 7. possible   | g. irrespective  |
| 8. matter     | h. killing       |
| 9. regardless | i. purpose       |
| 10. intent    | j. allegations   |

## Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- How dangerous is the situation between Iran and Saudi Arabia?
- Do you think Iran is right to be angry with Saudi Arabia?
- How can the two countries mend their relations?
- What importance do the two countries play in the region?
- What does "the roar of the word" mean?
- What advice do you have for Iran and Saudi Arabia?
- What do you think relations will be like in a month from now?

## Phrase Match

- |                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. put to                           | a. of disobedience        |
| 2. He was previously convicted      | b. origin                 |
| 3. he never carried weapons         | c. bullets                |
| 4. police                           | d. it on fire             |
| 5. Saudi Arabia is a largely        | e. death                  |
| 6. set parts of                     | f. matter                 |
| 7. pay a heavy                      | g. intent                 |
| 8. an internal Saudi                | h. Sunni Muslim country   |
| 9. ethnic                           | i. price                  |
| 10. We deal with facts and criminal | j. or called for violence |

## Discussion – Student B

- Do you think Saudi Arabia is right to be angry with Iran?
- What would make you protest in the street?
- What do you think Iran means by the term 'heavy price'?
- What can the world do to ease tensions in the region?
- Is there a right and a wrong country in this situation?
- What would you suggest to de-escalate tensions?
- What do you know about the differences between Sunni and Shia Islam?
- What questions would you like to ask the leaders of the two countries?

## Spelling

- following the oxctineeu
- a liorigeus figure
- put to death on rirtsmroe charges
- yypsoulier convicted of disobedience
- he never carried sawnpoe
- called for elenciov
- the Saudi Arabian saybmse
- Iran's genifro ministry
- no right to create esoitnns
- what a person does sagedrlsre
- his ethnic oriing or affiliation
- cilinrma intent

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. h	3. j	4. b	5. d
6. a	7. e	8. c	9. g	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Religious intolerance

You think religious intolerance is the best reason to protest in the streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their reasons aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): food prices, to not go to war or government corruption.

### Role B – Food prices

You think a rise in food prices is the best reason to protest in the streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their reasons aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): religious intolerance, to not go to war or government corruption.

### Role C – To not go to war

You think to not go to war is the best reason to protest in the streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their reasons aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): food prices, religious intolerance or government corruption.

### Role D – Government corruption

You think government corruption is the best reason to protest in the streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their reasons aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): food prices, to not go to war or religious intolerance.

## Speaking – Protests

Rank these with your partner. Put the things that would make you protest in the streets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • to not go to war      | • action of another country |
| • human rights          | • food prices               |
| • immigration           | • rise in taxes             |
| • religious intolerance | • corrupt government        |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.