Saudi Court Upholds Blogger's 10 years and 1,000 Lashes

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Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court has upheld the sentence of 1,000 lashes and 10 years of imprisonment on blogger Raif Badawi, despite a foreign outcry.

Speaking from Canada, his wife Ensaf Haidar told news agency AFP, "this is a final decision that is irrevocable."

In March, the kingdom expressed "surprise and dismay" at international criticism over the punishment.

At the time, the foreign ministry issued a statement saying it rejected interference in its internal affairs.

In 2012, Badawi was arrested and charged with "insulting Islam through electronic channels".

For four years he had been running the Liberal Saudi Network, which encouraged online debate on religious and political issues.

Saudi authorities sent his case for review as global pressure to free Badawi mounted.

Badawi received his first 50 lashes in January, but subsequent floggings have been postponed.

A shaky video taken on a mobile phone showed Badawi being lashed by a member of the security forces.

The footage prompted international protests which were repeated every Friday, the scheduled day for the beatings.

It is not clear why Badawi has not yet endured a second round though a medical report found he was not fit for the punishment.

Saudi Arabia enforces a strict version of Islamic law and does not tolerate political dissent. It has some of the highest social media usage rates in the region, and has cracked down on domestic online criticism.