

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 14/015/2009

28 May 2009

UA 134/09 **Death penalty/Fear of imminent execution**

IRAQ **12 people, names not known**

According to Iraqi media citing a spokesman from the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council, 12 people under sentence of death had their sentences upheld by the Cassation Court. Their cases will be referred to Iraq's Presidential Council for ratification, after which they could be executed at any time.

No further details were given except that 10 of those facing execution were sentenced to death by al-Najaf criminal court under Article 1(4) of the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Law and two others were sentenced to death by Babel and Basra criminal courts for murder.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty was suspended in 2003 while Iraq was under occupation by a US-led coalition. However, since its reintroduction by the Iraqi government in August 2004, hundreds of people have been sentenced to death and scores have been executed. At least 65 people were put to death in 2006 alone, many of them after unfair trials.

In 2007 at least 199 people were sentenced to death and 33 were executed, and in 2008 at least 285 people were sentenced to death and at least 34 executed. The totals could be much higher as there are no official figures for the number of prisoners facing execution and the Iraqi press's reporting of death sentences is erratic at best. The Presidential Council, which ratifies death sentences, is composed of the President and the two Vice-Presidents.

On 9 March 2009 the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council confirmed to Amnesty International that Iraq's Presidential Council had ratified the death sentences of 128 people, 12 of whom were executed on 3 May.

On 6 May 2009 the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) issued a statement expressing concern at the execution of the 12 people on 3 May and urging the Iraqi authorities to implement a moratorium on executions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concerns at reports that the Cassation Court has upheld the death sentences imposed on 12 people;
- requesting details of their full names and the charges against them;
- urging the authorities to commute these and all other death sentences;
- calling on them to establish a moratorium on executions.

APPEALS TO:

Please send appeals via the Iraqi embassy or diplomatic representative in your country, asking them to forward your appeals to:

President
Jalal Talabani
Salutation: Your Excellency

Vice-President
Tariq al-Hashimi
Salutation: Your Excellency

Vice-President
'Adil 'Abdul Mahdi
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hoshyar Zebari
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights
Wajdan Mikhail Salam
Fax: +9641 538 2007
Salutation: Your Excellency

and to diplomatic representatives of Iraq accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 July.