

**PUBLIC**

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**Death penalty/Imminent execution**

**16 November 2006**

**IRAQ**

**Awraz Abdel Aziz Mahmoud Sa'eed (m)**

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Amnesty International has received information that Awraz Abdel Aziz Mahmoud Sa'eed, also known as Abu-Amar al-Kurdi, has been sentenced to death and is facing imminent execution.

Awraz Abdel Aziz Mahmoud Sa'eed was sentenced to death by the Central Criminal Court of Iraq on 30 March 2006 reportedly in connection with the attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003 where 22 people were killed, including the UN special envoy to Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

The case was referred to the Court of Cassation on 6 June 2006. This court upheld the death sentence which is now awaiting ratification by the Presidential Council. At this stage Amnesty International does not have any details about the trial proceedings followed in this case.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The interim government of Iraq reinstated the death penalty in August 2004, for crimes such as murder, drug trafficking and kidnapping. They justified this as a response to the deteriorating security situation. Before he was selected as President in April 2005, Jalal Talabani had declared that he was opposed to the use of the death penalty, in interviews with national and international media.

Since the re-imposition of the death penalty scores of people have been sentenced to death. The first executions were carried out on 1 September 2005, when three people were executed.

On 21 September 11 people were executed by hanging in the city of Arbil, in the Kurdish-controlled area of Northern Iraq. To Amnesty International's knowledge these were the first executions to be carried out in the Kurdish region since 1992.

Earlier, around 6 September, 27 people were reportedly executed by hanging in Baghdad having been found guilty of deadly attacks against civilians. Amnesty International does not have any details of their trials.

In September 2006 the UN special representative for Iraq expressed deep concern that over 140 persons had been sentenced to death and over 50 executed since 2004 for in Iraq. He urged the Iraqi government "to commute all sentences of capital punishment and to base its quest for justice on the protection and promotion of the right to life".

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

- expressing concern that Awraz Abdel Aziz Mahmoud Sa'eed is facing imminent execution;
- recognizing the right of governments to bring to justice those responsible for serious crimes and indicating that Amnesty International had vigorously condemned the attack against the UN headquarters in Baghdad;
- calling on anyone found responsible for the attack to be brought to trial in accordance with international standards for fair trial and without the imposition of the death penalty;
- calling on the authorities to commute the death sentence, and abolish the death penalty in law and practice.

**APPEALS TO: fax numbers and e-mail addresses for the Iraqi authorities are not available. Please send appeals via the Iraqi embassy or diplomatic representative in your country, asking them to forward your appeals to:**

President of the Republic of Iraq

Jalal Talabani

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq

Hoshyar Zebari

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:** Ask the Iraqi embassy or diplomatic representative to send copies to the Human Rights Minister, Wajdan Mikhail.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**