

URGENT ACTION

SUDANESE MAN FACING EXECUTION FOR “SORCERY”

A Sudanese man, ‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki, who was sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia in 2007 for “sorcery”, may now be at imminent risk of execution.

‘Abdul Hamid Bin Hussain Bin Moustafa al-Fakki, who is aged about 36, was arrested on 8 December 2005 in the city of Madina by the Mutawa’een religious police, officially called the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (CPVPV). He was accused of practising sorcery, after being entrapped by the CPVPV. A man working for the CPVPV approached ‘Abdul Hamid and asked him to produce a spell that would lead to the man’s father separating from his second wife and returning to his first wife, the man’s mother. ‘Abdul Hamid apparently accepted to do this in exchange for 6,000 Saudi Arabian riyals (approximately US\$1,600).

He apparently took an advance of 2,000 riyals from the man, together with the names of his father and the father’s second wife, as well as the names of their mothers, and agreed to meet the man afterwards to deliver his work. He went to the agreed meeting place and was seen by CPVPV agents getting into the man’s car. He delivered his work, consisting of nine pieces of paper with codes written on them with saffron, and received the rest of the money. He was then arrested while in possession of bank notes whose serial numbers had been recorded by the CPVPV.

He was questioned and apparently beaten, and is believed to have confessed that he did carry out acts of sorcery in a bid to solve the family problems of the man who had approached him.

‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki was first brought before a summary court, which usually deals with minor offences, but the court refused to try his case on the ground that it did not have jurisdiction. As a result the case was referred to the General Court in Madina which sentenced him to death on 27 March 2007 for sorcery. He had no legal assistance and very little is known about his trial proceedings as they were held in secret. It has been over three years since he was sentenced to death, and it is likely that he is now at imminent risk of execution. He is still held in Madina Prison. His elderly parents have apparently appealed to the Sudanese authorities for assistance to seek commutation of his sentence and release but have had no help from them.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or your own language:

- √ Urging the King to halt the execution of ‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki;
- √ Calling on the authorities to release ‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki immediately and unconditionally if he has been convicted solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion;
- √ Urging the authorities to desist from charging and convicting people for “sorcery” where it violates the legitimate exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 JUNE 2010 TO:

King and Prime Minister

His Majesty King ‘Abdullah Bin ‘Abdul ‘Aziz Al-Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior)
+966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Majesty

Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin ‘Abdul ‘Aziz Al-Saud, Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933, Airport Road
Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

And copies to:

President, Human Rights Commission
Bandar Mohammed ‘Abdullah al- Aiban
Human Rights Commission
P.O. Box 58889, King Fahad Road,
Building No. 373, Riyadh 11515
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 461 2061

Email: hrc@haq-ksa.org

Salutation: Dear Mr al-Aiban

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The crime of “sorcery” is not defined in Saudi Arabian law, and has been used to punish people for the legitimate exercise of their human rights, including the rights to freedom of conscience, religion, belief and expression.

The Saudi Arabian authorities arrested scores of people for “sorcery” in 2009, and have arrested more this year. A number of them were arrested by the Mutawa’een. The last known execution for “sorcery” was that of Egyptian national Mustafa Ibrahim, on 2 November 2007. He had been arrested in May 2007 in the town of ‘Arar, where he worked as a pharmacist, and accused of “apostasy” for having degraded a copy of the Qur’an by putting it in a toilet.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences, including some with no lethal consequences such as sorcery. Court proceedings fall far short of international standards for fair trial. Defendants are rarely allowed formal representation by a lawyer, and in many cases are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. They may be convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress or deception. Since the beginning of 2010, at least 11 people have been executed.

In a report issued in 2008 on the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, Amnesty International highlighted the extensive use of the death penalty as well as the disproportionately high number of executions of foreign nationals from developing countries. For further information please see *Saudi Arabia: Affront to Justice: Death Penalty in Saudi Arabia* (Index: MDE 23/027/2008), 14 October 2008: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/saudi-arabia-executions-target-foreign-nationals-20081014>

UA: 114/10 Index: MDE 23/008/2010 Issue Date: 12 May 2010

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