

Further Information on UA 02/07 (MDE 14/001/2007, 04 January 2007) Imminent execution/possible death sentence

IRAQ	Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti (m)] executed
	‘Awad Hamad al-Bandar al-Sa’dun (m)] executed
	Taha Yassin Ramadhan (m)	

Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti and ‘Awad Hamad al-Bandar al-Sa’dun were executed by hanging in the early hours of 15 January. The two had been sentenced to death on 5 November 2006, after an unfair trial before the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (SICT). They were sentenced in connection with the killing of 148 people from the village of al-Dujail, north of Baghdad, after a failed attempt to assassinate former president Saddam Hussain in 1982.

Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti is Saddam Hussain’s half-brother, and was the head of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, the *Mukhabarat*, from 1979 to 1983. ‘Awad Hamad al-Bandar al-Sa’dun was the head of the Revolutionary Court. Saddam Hussain was executed by hanging on 30 December 2006.

There is still no new information about former vice-president, Taha Yassin Ramadhan, who received a life sentence. However, he remains at risk of execution after the SICT’s Appeals Chamber referred the case back to the court on 26 December 2006, requesting a more stringent sentence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International welcomed the decision to bring Saddam Hussain to justice for the human rights violations committed by his government, but this should have been through a fair trial process and without recourse to the death penalty. In the event, the trial, which opened in October 2005 in Baghdad, was unfair. It was marked by political interference and was widely criticised for failing to satisfy international standards for fair trial. No adequate measures were taken to ensure the protection of witnesses and defence lawyers, three of whom were assassinated during the course of the trial. Amnesty International raised its concerns about the trial of Saddam Hussain and others before the SICT on several occasions.

Since the reintroduction of the death penalty in Iraq in August 2004, scores of people have been sentenced to death and there has been a rapid rise in the number of executions, with at least 65 people put to death in 2006 alone, many of them after trials which may have been unfair.

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

- deploring the execution of Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti and ‘Awad Hamad al-Bandar al-Sa’dun;
- expressing concern that the trial of Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, Taha Yassin Ramadhan and ‘Awad Hamad al-Bandar al-Sa’dun before the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal failed to meet international fair trial standards;
- expressing concern that the Appeals Chamber has rejected Taha Yassin Ramadhan’s sentence of life imprisonment and apparently requested that he be sentenced to death;
- recognizing the right of governments to bring to justice those responsible for serious crimes but insisting that this be done through fair trial and without resort to the death penalty;
- calling on the authorities to commute all death sentences and take steps to 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

Jalal Talabani

Salutation: Your ExcellencyPrime Minister

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

E-mail: iraqigov@yahoo.com**Salutation: Your Excellency**Minister of Justice

Hashim al-Shibli

E-mail: minister@iraqi-justice.org**head-minister@iraqi-justice.org****deputy@iraqi-justice.org****Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hoshyar Zebari

E-mail: press@iraqmofa.net

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. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 February 2007.*****