

EXTERNAL

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Death penalty

30 May 1996

SAUDI ARABIA Hatem Fawaz al-Zughbi al-Harbi, Kuwaiti national

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Hatem Fawaz al-Zughbi al-Harbi, a Kuwaiti national, has been sentenced to death on murder charges and is reported to be facing execution in Saudi Arabia within the next three months if his family does not pay 2.1 million dollars blood money to relatives of the murder victim. The family of the prisoner, who live in al-Jahra, an area north of Kuwait City inhabited mainly by bedouin tribes, placed an appeal in the Kuwaiti daily, *al-Anba*, on 15-16 May 1996 seeking financial donations to raise the required sum.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Executions have been increasing alarmingly in Saudi Arabia in recent years and a large number of people are believed to be on death row. Executions are invariably carried out after trials in which internationally agreed safeguards for prisoners facing the death penalty are completely ignored. Defendants are not allowed to be defended by lawyers during trial hearings, and confessions, even when obtained under torture, are accepted by courts as evidence, and may be the sole evidence on which conviction is obtained. More information on the use of the death penalty and executions in Saudi Arabia is provided in Amnesty International's Urgent Actions issued over the years, particularly those issued in 1995.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic, or your own language:**

- expressing opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment;
- expressing concern at reports that Hatem Fawaz al-Zughbi al-Harbi is facing imminent execution and calling for his death sentence to be unconditionally commuted;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime and their families, but pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments, and is brutalizing to all involved in its application.

#### APPEALS TO:

The Custodian of the two Holy Shrines  
His majesty  
King Fahd bin 'Abdul-'Aziz  
Office of H.M. The King  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
**Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Salutation: Your Majesty**

His Royal Highness  
Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz  
Minister of Interior  
PO Box 2833, Riyadh 11134  
**Telegrams: Minister of Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

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**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 July 1996.