

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 155/96

Flogging

3 October 1996

SAUDI ARABIA24 Filipino workers, names unknown

Twenty-four Filipino workers are reported to have been sentenced to 200 lashes each, following their arrest for homosexual behaviour, and to have received the first 50 lashes of their sentence on 30 September 1996. The other lashes will be given over three sessions, following which the Filipinos will be deported.

The exact circumstances surrounding the arrest are not known to Amnesty International, although the organization is seeking further clarification of these details. The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said that "the Saudi Arabian authorities arrested them for homosexual behaviour", although the individuals were reportedly not engaging in sexual intercourse.

Amnesty International is concerned that the 24 Filipinos may have been punished for homosexual behaviour in violation of their internationally guaranteed rights to privacy and the norm of non-discrimination. If so, and if they are in detention, the organization would consider them to be prisoners of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although Saudi Arabia does not have a written Penal Code, the general practice for individuals convicted of homosexual behaviour is a custodial sentence and flogging. Amnesty International considers those imprisoned solely because of their practice of consensual homosexual acts between adults in private to be prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International considers flogging as a judicial punishment for any offence to be a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, contrary to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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

- appealing for the remaining sentence of 150 lashes against each of 24 Filipino nationals to be commuted;
- expressing concern about the penalty of lashes as a judicial punishment for any offence, as it is a form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, contrary to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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

Minister of Interior
His Royal Highness
Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Ministry of the Interior
PO Box 2833

Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Minister of the Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 404416
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Foreign Affairs
His Royal Highness
Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz
Nasseriya Street, Riyadh 11124
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 405000
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice
His Excellency
Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh
Ministry of Justice
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 405 980 MINJUS SJ
Salutation: Your Excellency

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 3 November 1996.