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Preventive Death Penalty Action

9 November 1999

SAUDI ARABIA

Amnesty International is concerned at the increased use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in recent months. The execution of Farhan Bin Yahya Bin Hasan Mashikhi on 9 November 1999 brings the number of people put to death this year to 101. The organization fears that dozens more are also at risk.

People are executed after grossly unfair trials, in flagrant violation of 1984 UN Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty.

The secrecy and summary nature of the criminal justice system makes it very difficult to get information about the number of people on death row, the details of the charges against them and the trial proceedings - in some cases even the prisoners themselves do not know. Amnesty International has sought clarification from the Saudi Arabian authorities of over 50 cases of people believed to be on death row, but has not received any response.

This Urgent Action is part of a campaign of weekly preventative death penalty actions being issued over a number of weeks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Crimes punishable by death include drug trafficking, murder, rape, armed robbery and apostasy (turning away from Islam). Of the 101 people executed this year, 53 have been foreign nationals, including 15 Pakistanis, 10 Nigerians (three of them women), nine Afghans, six Indians, as well as nationals of Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Syria, Jordan, Ethiopia, Chad and Yemen.

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

- expressing dismay at the continued use of the death penalty and calling for an immediate halt to all executions and the commutation of all outstanding death sentences;
- expressing concern that executions are carried out after trials that fall far short of international standards, and urging the authorities to follow international standards for capital trials;
- calling for details and clarification of the legal position of all those currently on death row.

APPEALS TO:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul-'Ariz.
Office of H.M. The King
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of the Interior
His Royal Highness, Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Ariz.
Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior
PO Box 2933, Airport Road,
Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice
His Excellency
Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice

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University Street,
Riyadh 11137, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Information
His Excellency Dr. Fuad Abdul Salam Al-Farsi
Minister of Information, Ministry of Information
PO Box 843, Riyadh 11161,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Faxes: + 966 1 402 3570 / 405 0674
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 21 December 1999.