

URGENT ACTION

SAUDI ARABIAN MAN AT RISK OF BEHEADING

Saudi Arabia's Court of Cassation has confirmed that a 22-year-old man, Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly, is sentenced to death by beheading, with his body then to be crucified. His sentence should be passed to the Supreme Judicial Council, headed by the King. Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly could be executed at any time if the Council approves his sentence.

The Supreme Judicial Council can approve death sentences or send them back to the Court of Cassation for review. However, according to a report by *Okaz*, a Saudi Arabian newspaper, the authorities in the northern city of Hail where Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly is held, have begun to prepare for the execution.

Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly was convicted by the General Court in Hail of the kidnapping and rape of four people, which took place in February 2009.

Very little is known about Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly's trial, but death sentences are invariably imposed and carried out after unfair trials carried out in secret. He did not have access to a lawyer during his trial, and there are reports that he may be suffering from a psychological disorder. If this is the case, sentencing him to death would be in defiance of UN Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2004/67, which urges states that still maintain the death penalty "not to impose the death penalty on a person suffering from any form of mental disorder or to execute any such person".

Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly has been sentenced to crucifixion of his body, in addition to the death sentence. Crucifixions in Saudi Arabia take place after the beheading; the body along with the separated head are placed on a pole in a public square to act as a deterrent.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the King to halt the execution of Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly;
- Calling on him to commute Muhammad Basheer al-Ramaly's death sentence, and those of all others under sentence of death in Saudi Arabia, as a matter of urgency, with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 DECEMBER 2009 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

Mr 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

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA: 164/09 (MDE 23/020/2009). Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/020/2009/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At least 158 people were executed in 2007, and at least 102 in 2008. Since the beginning of 2009, a further 58 people are known to have been executed.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences, including some with no lethal consequences. 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.

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>

Saudi Arabia's last known execution and crucifixion of the body took place on 29 May 2009. See <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/man-beheaded-and-crucified-saudi-arabia-20090601>

Further information on UA: 164/09 Index: MDE 23/031/2009 Issue Date: 03 November 2009

