

UA 131/00

Sharp increase in executions and amputationsWeekly pr

SAUDI ARABIA 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad al-Shatiri, Yemeni national (amputation)
Salem bin Hussein bin 'Omar, Yemeni national (amputation)
Fawaz bin 'Ashwan bin Jaber, Saudi Arabian national (amputation)
Miraj bin Khan Surur, Indian national (executed)

With the execution of Indian national Miraj bin Khan Surur, 17 people are now known to have been put to death in the last three weeks alone. So far this year 41 people have been executed, more than half of them foreign nationals.

So far this year 18 amputations have been carried out, seven of them cross amputations (amputation of right hand and left foot). Half of these amputations took place in the last three weeks, including those carried out on the three people named above. Again, more than half the victims were foreign nationals: eight Saudi Arabians, five Yemenis, three Nigerians and two Egyptians.

Of the 41 people whose executions Amnesty International has recorded, 16 were Saudi Arabian, seven Nigerian, four Indian, three Pakistani, three Sudanese, two Eritrean, two Yemeni, one Filipino and one Ethiopian. Two were of unknown nationality.

Only the government knows how many people face execution or amputation in the coming days, weeks and months. These people are invariably tried behind closed doors and denied the most elementary rights of fair trial, including the right to be defended by a lawyer, and the right to effective opportunity to scrutinize the evidence against them. Confessions obtained under duress, torture or by deception are sometimes admitted in court and may be the sole evidence on which conviction is based.

Amnesty International recognises the right and responsibility of all governments to bring to justice those guilty of recognizably criminal offences. However, the organisation defends the fundamental, internationally recognized rights of all people, including the right to life and the right to freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, as enshrined in Articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences. Among these are offences with no lethal consequences, including sorcery and drug offences.

Theft is punishable by amputation of the right hand. Highway robbery is punished by cross amputation. These punishments are prohibited by international human rights standards, which ban torture and other cruel punishments.

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

- expressing dismay at the continuing use of the death penalty and amputations in Saudi Arabia;
- calling for an immediate halt to executions and amputations, and for all such sentences outstanding to be commuted;
- urging that international standards for capital trials are strictly observed.

APPEALS TO (please note that Saudi fax numbers can be very unreliable):

King and Prime Minister**The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines**

His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Office of H.M. The King

Royal Court, 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 'Aziz

Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior

P.O. Box 2933

Airport Road

Riyadh 11134

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: + 966 1 403 1185**Telegram: Minister of Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia****Telexes: 404416****Salutation: Your Royal Highness****Minister of Foreign Affairs**

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Nasseriya Street

Riyadh 11124

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**Fax: + 966 1 403 0159****Telexes: 405000****Salutation: Your Royal Highness****Minister of Justice**

His Excellency Dr. 'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh

Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice

University Street

Riyadh 11137

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: + 966 1 401 1741**Telegram: Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia****Telexes: 405 980 MINJUS SJ****Salutation: Your Excellency****COPIES TO:** 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 18 July 2000.