

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 167/06 (MDE 25/005/2006, 13 June 2006) - Death by stoning/flogging

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) Shahin 'Abdul Rahman (m)
Asma Bikham Bijam (f)**

A United Arab Emirates (UAE) Appeal Court has commuted the sentence of death by stoning handed down by a Shari'a (Islamic) court against Shahin 'Abdul Rahman, whose nationality is now believed to be Bangladeshi. He has reportedly been sentenced to one year's imprisonment followed by deportation to his home country.

On 19 June 2006, the Appeal Court upheld Asma Bikham Bijam's sentence of 100 lashes in addition to a one-year prison term.

Shahin 'Abdul Rahman received the sentence on 10 June for committing adultery in April 2005. He was allegedly found naked in bed with Asma Bikham Bijam, a domestic worker, and her employer called the police. Shahin 'Abdul Rahman, who is married, reportedly admitted to having a sexual relationship outside marriage with Asma Bikham Bijam.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International opposes laws that criminalise adult consensual sexual relations in private. Treating adultery and sexual relations outside marriage as criminal offences is not consistent with international human rights standards. The UN Human Rights Committee has stated explicitly that "it is undisputed that adult consensual sexual activity in private is covered by the concept of privacy". Furthermore, criminalising these acts affects women more than men.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty and judicial punishments that amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, regardless of the crime for which they are imposed, or the nature of the legal code which provides for such punishments. Some Emirates in the UAE apply Shari'a law by passing sentences of death by stoning and flogging.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Shahin 'Abdul Rahman and Asma Bikham Bijam
- expressing concern that Shahin 'Abdul Rahman has been sentenced to one year's imprisonment and Asma Bikham Bijam has been sentenced to 100 lashes and one year's imprisonment;
- stating that Amnesty International (AI) considers the punishment of flogging to constitute torture and calling for the sentence of flogging against Asma Bikham Bijam to be commuted;
- stating that AI opposes laws that criminalise adult consensual sexual relations in private.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

His Excellency

Major-General Shaikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Ministry of the Interior

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and to diplomatic representatives of United Arab Emirates accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 August.