

URGENT ACTION

FORMER IRAQI OFFICIALS FACE DEATH PENALTY

A former Minister of Interior and two former top officials under Saddam Hussein were sentenced to death on 29 November and could be executed within 30 days if their sentences are confirmed by the appeal court. Amnesty International has stressed that the death penalty is the ultimate denial of human rights and should never be used, whatever the gravity of the crime.

Sa'doun Shakir, former Interior Minister of Iraq in the 1980's, was sentenced to death on 29 November by the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (SICT), together with **Mizban Khuder Hadi** and **'Aziz Salih al-Noaman** formerly senior officials under Saddam Hussain and members of regional Ba'ath party commands. All three were convicted of participating in the killings and displacement of Faili Kurds (Shi'a Kurds) during the Iran –Iraq war between 1980 and 1988. If their sentences are confirmed on appeal, they are likely to be executed by hanging within 30 days.

Sa'doun Shakir was previously sentenced to death by the SICT on 26 October, after he and Tariq Aziz were convicted in another trial of participating in the elimination of Shi'a religious parties under Saddam Hussain. Mizban Khuder Hadi was also previously sentenced to death on 1 August after the SICT convicted him on charges related to the deliberate drying of the southern marshes area and other offences.

Saadoun Shakir was arrested by US forces in April 2003 and has been imprisoned since then. Before being made Minister of Interior he headed Iraq's Intelligence service. He left politics in 1990 due to deteriorating health.

Amnesty International has previously questioned the fairness of trials before the SICT, which was established to try Saddam Hussain and others accused of responsibility for the crimes committed during his rule. In particular, the SICT has been subject to political interference, undermining its independence.

The death penalty was suspended for a time after the US-led invasion of Iraq but restored in August 2004. Since then, hundreds of people have been sentenced to death and many have been executed. Amnesty International considers the death penalty to be a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or English:

- urging that the death sentences imposed on Sa'doun Shakir, Mizban Khuder Hadi and 'Aziz Salih al-Noaman are commuted if they are confirmed by the appeal court;
- recognizing that governments have an obligation to bring to justice those responsible for serious crimes but insisting that the death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and should not be applied even for crimes of the greatest magnitude;
- calling on the authorities to commute all death sentences and declare a moratorium on executions.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO THE IRAQI EMBASSY IN YOUR COUNTRY BEFORE 11 JANUARY 2011 TO:

President

His Excellency Jalal Talabani
President of the Republic of Iraq
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)
Baghdad, Iraq

Salutation: His Excellency

His Excellency Nuri Kamil al-Maliki
Prime Minister
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)
Baghdad, Iraq

Salutation: His Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
His Excellency Hoshyar Zebari
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh)
Baghdad, Iraq

Prime Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office after the above date.

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