

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **Saudi Arabia: Disturbing increase in executions**

Amnesty International (AI) is gravely concerned at the recent increase in executions in Saudi Arabia. Eight people have reportedly been executed in less than one week bringing the total number of executions documented by AI to at least 31 this year. The eight include four Pakistanis, three Iraqis and one Saudi Arabian.

The executions of last week account for almost one quarter of all the executions recorded by AI this year. AI is concerned that others could be executed in the coming days or weeks.

While AI does not know how many people face the death penalty or who are sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia, the organization fears that there are many people currently detained who may be at risk of imminent execution. This includes three women, Majda Mostafa Mahir, Sit Zainab Binti Duhri Rupa and Sarah Jane Dematera, sentenced to death in connection with murder, after grossly unfair trials in which their basic rights were denied. Our organization has continuously appealed to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to commute their sentences, including most recently last month.

Trials in Saudi Arabia are often grossly in violation of international standards for fair trials. They often take place behind closed doors. Most defendants are not given the right to a lawyer and the right to an effective appeal. They may also have been convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress, torture or deception. Foreign workers are particularly vulnerable as many do not speak Arabic and may be forced to sign a confession in a language they cannot understand. They also do not have access to their family and in many instances, consular assistance.

AI recognizes the right and responsibility of all governments to bring to justice those guilty of recognizably criminal offences. However, our organization fundamentally opposes the death penalty as the ultimate violation of the right to life. Trials for that purpose must meet internationally recognised standards of fair trials. The organization is committed to defending all people against the violations of these fundamental and internationally recognized rights.

AI urges King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to commute all outstanding death sentences and to bring trial proceedings of people facing such punishments in line with international standards.

#### **Background**

Almost half of those executed so far this year have been foreign nationals. They are seven Pakistanis, one Sudanese, one Yemeni, four Iraqis, 17 Saudi Arabians and one Sri Lankan woman.