

PUBLIC

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Fear of f

**SAUDI ARABIANine Saudi Arabian Nationals**

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Nine Saudi Arabian nationals are to be flogged for "deviant sexual behaviour", according to an Associated Press (AP) report.

On 16 April AP reported that five people had been sentenced to 2,600 lashes and six years' imprisonment, and four to 2,400 lashes and five years' imprisonment. The information apparently came from a police officer speaking on condition of anonymity, and mentioned no names or further details.

On 19 April Amnesty International wrote to the Saudi Arabian Minister of Interior, seeking clarification of the report, and appealed to the government not to carry out the floggings. Amnesty International also sought details of the charges against the nine to assess whether they were prisoners of conscience. As usual the government has not replied, demonstrating yet again that victims of human rights violations in Saudi Arabia must suffer in secrecy.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Flogging is mandatory in Saudi Arabia for a number of offences, including sexual offences, and can also be used at the discretion of judges as an alternative or addition to other punishments. Sentences can range from dozens to thousands of lashes.

Amnesty International considers the punishment of flogging to be cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment amounting to torture, in contravention of Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

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

- expressing concern at the Associated Press report that nine people are to be flogged, and, if it is true, calling for the sentences not to be carried out;
- asking to know the precise charges against the nine, together with details of their trial proceedings and the evidence produced against them, and to know whether they have been allowed defence lawyers of their own choosing, and whether they are allowed appeal against their convictions and sentences;
- stating that you consider the use of flogging as punishment to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, contrary to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

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

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines  
His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul 'Aziz  
Office of H.M. The King, Royal Court, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
**Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Telexes: 201039 CABINET SJ**  
**Salutation: Your Majesty**

Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness, Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz  
Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior  
PO Box 2933, Airport Road, Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Faxes: + 966 1 403 1185**  
**Telexes: 401622 MORS SJ or 202811 INFORM SJ**  
**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness, Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Nasseriya Street, Riyadh 11124  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
**Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Faxes: + 966 1 403 0159**  
**Telexes: 405000 MFA SJ**  
**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  
**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Faxes: + 966 1 401 1741**  
**Telexes: 404450 JUSTIC SJ**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES 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 23 June 2000.