

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 23/22/99

8 December 1999

Further information on EXTRA 174/99 (MDE 23/21/99, 3 December 1999) - Death penalty/fear of imminent execution

SAUDI ARABIA Abdel Aziz, aged 19 (name previously unknown, age given as 28)

Abdel Aziz was reported today to have been granted a further week to raise the US\$1.3 million required to halt his execution for murder.

According to Agence France Presse, an Islamic court in Mecca granted the extension on Tuesday to allow him more time to raise the "blood money" demanded by the victim's family to spare his life. It was also reported that Abdel Aziz would be executed if the money was not raised. He had originally been given until today to raise the sum, said by the Saudi Arabian press to be unusually high for such a case.

The Saudi Arabian newspapers *Al-Madinah* and *Arab News* are said to have set up telephone lines for the public to donate money.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Capital trials in Saudi Arabia violate Articles 1 and 5 of the 1984 United Nations Safeguards guaranteeing the protection of those facing the death penalty, which state respectively "In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, capital punishment may be imposed only for the most serious crimes, it being understood that their scope should not go beyond intentional crimes with lethal or other extremely grave consequences" and "Capital punishment may only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court after legal process which gives all possible safeguards to ensure a fair trial... including the right of anyone suspected of or charged with a crime for which capital punishment may be imposed to adequate legal assistance at all stages of the proceedings."

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

- urging the authorities to halt the planned execution of Abdel Aziz whether or not the money is raised, and to commute his sentence to a more humane punishment;
- urging the authorities to follow international standards for capital trials;
- calling for an immediate halt to all executions and the commutation of all outstanding death sentences.

APPEALS TO:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Office of H.M. The King
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
PO Box 2933, Airport Road,
Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Faxes: + 966 1 403 1185
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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Information

His Excellency Dr. Fuad Abdul Salam Al-Farsi

Minister of Information, Ministry of Information
PO Box 843, Riyadh 11161,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: Information Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Faxes: + 966 1 402 3570

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 5 January 2000.