

URGENT ACTION

THREE MEN AT RISK OF EXECUTION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Three foreign nationals convicted of drugs related offences are at risk of execution in Saudi Arabia against the backdrop of an upsurge of executions since the beginning of 2012. Two other men were executed on 14 February for similar offences.

Ali Agirdas, a Turkish national, and **Sheikh Mastan** and **Hamza Abu Bakir**, both Indian nationals, may be executed at any time for drugs related offences.

Ali Agirdas, aged 31, was arrested on 24 February 2007 for allegedly smuggling drugs in Riyadh and was convicted and sentenced to death by a General Court in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, on 18 June 2008. His sentence is being considered by the King who can approve it at any time. Ali Agirdas did not have a lawyer or an interpreter during his interrogation. He was only assisted by a lawyer during his appeal.

Sheikh Mastan and Hamza Abu Bakir are currently held in al-Dammam Prison in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. They were arrested in January 2004 on charges of drug possession and sentenced to death by a court in al-Dammam in June 2006. Very little is known about their trial except that their sentences are said to have been upheld on appeal.

Concern over the fate of the men has increased following eight executions that have reportedly taken place since the start of 2012 of which five were for drugs related offences, including two that took place on 14 February.

Death sentences imposed for drugs related offences do not fall into the category of "most serious crimes" embodied in international standards such as the UN Safeguards. These require that the scope of crimes punishable by death "should not go beyond intentional crimes with lethal or other extremely grave consequences."

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Urge the King of Saudi Arabia to halt the execution of Ali Agirdas, Sheikh Mastan and Hamza Abu Bakir
- Urge the King to commute their sentences and to impose an immediate moratorium on all executions as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia;
- Remind the authorities that, pending full abolition, they should act in accordance with international standards and limit the use of the death penalty to "most serious crimes", and ensure that it may only be imposed after a fair trial in which the defendant is given adequate legal assistance.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 MARCH 2012 TO:

King

His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdul
Aziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior)
+966 1 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

Crown Prince and Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Naif Bin
Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
Airport Road
Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 3125 (please keep
trying)
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

And copies to:

President, Human Rights Commission
Bandar Mohammed 'Abdullah al-Aiban
Human Rights Commission
P.O. Box 58889, King Fahad Road,
Building No. 373, Riyadh 11515
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Email: hrc@haq-ksa.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for more than 100 prisoners who are currently known to be under sentence of death in Saudi Arabia for alleged drugs related offences. Most of them are foreign nationals and are said to have been sentenced to death in trials that failed to meet international standards for fair trial; some apparently were not granted legal assistance.

In Saudi Arabia there have been disturbing patterns of discrimination against vulnerable individuals. Many of those executed over the past years were foreign nationals, mostly migrant workers from poor and developing countries. Amnesty International has recorded some 80 executions for 2011, around triple the figure of 27 for 2010. In 2009, at least 69 people are known to have been executed, in 2008 at least 102, and in 2007 at least 158.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences. Court proceedings fall far short of international standards for fair trial. Defendants are rarely allowed formal representation by lawyers, and in many cases are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. They may be convicted solely on the basis of "confessions" obtained under duress or deception.

In a report published in 2008 on the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, Amnesty International highlighted the extensive use of the death penalty as well as the disproportionately high number of executions of foreign nationals from developing countries. For further information please see *Saudi Arabia: Affront to Justice: Death Penalty in Saudi Arabia* (Index: MDE 23/027/2008), 14 October 2008: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/saudi-arabia-executions-target-foreign-nationals-20081014>

Ali Agirdas was the subject of an Urgent Action in 2009, UA 302/09 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/033/2009/en> and Sheikh Mastan and Hamza Abu Bakir were the subject of an Urgent Action in 2007, UA 309/07 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/047/2008/en>

Name: Ali Agirdas, Sheikh Mastan and Hamza Abu Bakir
Gender m/f: M

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