

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 23/002/2009

23 January 2009

UA 20/09 Death Penalty/ Fear of imminent execution

SAUDI ARABIA	Ayadh Mana' Wanas Matar (m), aged 37]
	Hussein Baida Abud (m), aged 23] Iraqi nationals
	Adnan Jamil (m), aged 25]
	Mahmoud Shekar (m), aged 42]
	Khaled Mitran (m), aged 25]
	At least 10 others]

The men named above are among at least 15 Iraqi nationals feared to be at imminent risk of execution. They have all been sentenced to death for various charges ranging from ones relating to drugs, connection with armed groups in Iraq and smuggling of weapons into Saudi Arabia. All are detained in Rafha prison, in the north of Saudi Arabia, near the border with Iraq.

One of the men, Ayadh Mana' Wanas Matar, was arrested in November 2004 on a drug-related charge. He was interrogated for three months, during which he was allegedly tortured and forced to confess to the charge. The torture apparently included him being beaten on the soles of his feet and all over his body. He was sentenced to death in July 2008 by a criminal court in Rafha. Ayadh Mana' Wanas Matar had no lawyer during his trial proceedings, which were secret and summary.

Like Ayadh Mana' Wanas Matar, all the other Iraqi nationals were beaten until they confessed, and all claim that they are innocent. None of the 15 has been allowed access to lawyers since their arrests. Prisoners in Saudi Arabia may be put to death without a scheduled date for execution being made known to them or their families. Therefore, the 15 could be executed at any time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 a lawyer, 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 recent report 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), issued on 14 October 2008:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/saudi-arabia-executions-target-foreign-nationals-20081014>

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic and English or your own language:

- urging the King, as the head of the Supreme Judicial Council, to halt the execution of Ayadh Mana' Wanas Matar, Hussein Baida Abud, Adnan Jamil, Mahmoud Shekar, Khaled Mitran and at least 10 other Iraqi nationals in Rafha prison;
- calling on the King to commute their death sentences and those of all others under sentence of death in Saudi Arabia as a matter of urgency, with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

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 1185 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Majesty

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Minister of the Interior

Ministry of the Interior

P.O. Box 2933

Airport Road

Riyadh 11134

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Riyadh 11124

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 403 0645

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

COPIES TO:

Turki bin Khaled Al-Sudairy

President

Human Rights Commission

P.O. Box 58889

King Fahad Road, Building No. 373

Riyadh 11515

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 4612061

and 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 6 March 2009.