

PUBLIC

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06 November 2008

Further Information on UA 219/08 (MDE 23/035/2008, 08 August 2008) Risk of Imminent Execution

SAUDI ARABIA 'Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri, aged about 36 (m)]
Qassim Bin Rida Bin Sulayman al Mahdi, aged about 24 (m)] Saudi Arabian nationals
Khalid Bin Muhammad 'Issa al-Qadihi, aged about 27 (m)]

The three men mentioned above have exhausted all their appeals. It is now at least three months since their death sentences were confirmed and they could be executed at any time.

'Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri, Qassim Bin Rida Bin Sulayman al Mahdi and Khalid Bin Muhammad 'Issa al-Qadihi were arrested in 2004 and convicted and sentenced to death on drug smuggling charges. The confessions on which their guilt was ascertained were extracted under torture and other ill-treatment. During the interrogation the men were held incommunicado and were denied legal assistance. They were convicted and sentenced after three short trial sessions, during which they had no legal assistance or representation.

Qassim Bin Rida Bin Sulayman al Mahdi and Khalid Bin Muhammad 'Issa al-Qadihi were sentenced to death and 'Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and 5,000 lashes. The three men lodged an appeal against the sentences with the Court of Cassation. The court reviewed the case and requested a reduction in the men's sentences on the grounds that the defendants had no prior criminal record and were all young. In spite of the Court of Cassation's decision, the Lower Court increased 'Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri's sentence to death.

At least 84 people have been executed so far this year. In 2007 the authorities executed at least 158 people.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences, including some with no lethal consequences, and does so following trials which invariably fall short of the most basic international standards. Hearings are often held in secret, and defendants are generally not permitted any formal legal representation. They may be convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress or deception. In many cases defendants and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. Prisoners under sentence of death may not be made aware of the date of execution until the morning when they are taken out and beheaded.

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

- expressing Amnesty International's opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, but emphasizing that the death sentences in this case were imposed following a trial in which the three men named above were denied legal assistance or representation;
- urging the King as the head of the Supreme Judicial Council to therefore commute the death sentences against the three men without delay, and, in the meantime, to ensure their sentences are not implemented;
- reminding the authorities that they should act in accordance with international standards for fair trial, including the United Nations Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, which state that capital punishment may only be imposed after a fair trial in which the defendant is provided with "adequate legal assistance at all stages of the proceedings".

APPEALS TO: (Please note that you may experience difficulties sending faxes on Thursdays and Fridays, which are the weekend in Saudi Arabia)

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
Nasseriya Street
Riyadh 11124
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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

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and to diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia, accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.