

PUBLIC

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Flogging

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) "R.A.", teenage girl

A teenage girl has reportedly been sentenced to receive 60 lashes for having "illicit sex". According to a local newspaper, the Supreme Court has upheld the sentence. The sentence could now be carried out at any time.

The girl, identified by her initials as R.A, is to receive 60 lashes for having sex with a man when she was 14. The court of First Instance in the town of al-'Ain in the Emirate of Abu-Dhabi found her guilty of "illicit sex" and sentenced her to be flogged.

The man involved in the case, identified by his initials as H.S, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. This discriminatory sentencing is a violation of the UAE's obligations under international law. The UAE became a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, or the Women's Convention) in October 2004 and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in February 1997. In its General Recommendation No. 19, the CEDAW Committee made clear that discrimination prohibited by article 1 of the Convention includes gender-based violence, that is violence directed against a woman which "impairs or nullifies" the enjoyment of her human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as "the right not to be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Corporal punishment, such as whipping and flogging, has been recognized as torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by numerous human rights treaty bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child. International human rights law explicitly prohibits torture, or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. As a state party to CEDAW and the CRC, the UAE is violating its international legal obligations to prohibit torture, or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Amnesty International opposes judicial punishments that amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, regardless of the crime for which they are imposed, or the nature of the legal code that sanctions such punishments.

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

- expressing concern at reports that a teenage girl is to receive 60 lashes because she engaged in a sexual relationship with a man when she was 14;
- expressing concern that the sentence of flogging imposed on a teenage girl contravenes the UAE's obligations under international human rights treaties;
- stating that Amnesty International considers the punishment of flogging to constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment amounting to torture.

APPEALS TO:

Vice-President and Prime Minister

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum

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COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the United Arab Emirates accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 August 2007.