

URGENT ACTION

DEATH SENTENCE FOR 'DRUG SMUGGLING'

A man convicted of drug-smuggling is at imminent risk of execution in Saudi Arabia. He says he has been tortured and received an unfair trial.

Hajras bin Saleh bin Muhammad al-Qurey, 53, was sentenced to death on 16 January 2013, for drug-smuggling, by the General Court in the south-eastern city of Najran. The sentence was later upheld both by an appeal court and the Supreme Court, and he claims that he has received an official text message notifying him that the local authorities at the Najran General Prison where he is held have been ordered to carry out the execution.

Hajras al-Qurey and his son Muhammad al-Qurey were arrested on 7 January 2012 at the al-Khadra border crossing with Yemen, when customs officers suspected them of carrying drugs in their car. According to the court documents, Hajras al-Qurey tried to drive away at speed to escape from the border police, but they gave chase and caught him. According to his family, Hajras suffers from psychological problems and has been known to lose control of himself when under pressure.

Both men were then taken for interrogation and have claimed they were tortured. Muhammad al-Qurey confessed, and testified that his father had not known that he, Muhammad, was smuggling drugs. They were denied access to lawyers during interrogation. The General Court in Najran ignored evidence from an assessment it had commissioned that found Hajras al-Qurey was suffering from a medical condition that might have impaired his judgment.

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

- Calling on the authorities to halt the execution of Hajras bin Saleh bin Muhammad al-Qurey and commute his death sentence;
- Urging them to ensure that he and his son receive a fair trial in accordance with international standards and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Calling on them to order without delay an impartial and independent investigation into the men's allegation that they were tortured and otherwise ill-treated;
- Urging them to establish immediately an official moratorium on all executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty in Saudi Arabia.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 SEPTEMBER 2014 TO:

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin
Abdulkareem Al-Issa
Ministry of Justice
University Street
Riyadh 11137
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 401 1741,
+966 11 402 0311
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed
bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 403 3125 (please keep
trying)
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

King and Prime Minister

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 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia is one of the top executioners in the world, with more than 2,000 people executed between 1985 and 2013. In 2013, it executed at least 79 people, three of whom were juveniles at the time of the crimes for which they were put to death. So far in 2014, at least 26 people have been executed, including eight in August alone.

Court proceedings in Saudi Arabia fall far short of international standards for fair trial. Trials in capital cases are often held in secret. 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. Foreign nationals with no knowledge of Arabic – the language of pre-trial interrogation and trial hearings – are often denied adequate interpretation facilities. In some cases condemned prisoners' families are not notified in advance of their execution.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty to a wide range of offences that are not accepted as "most serious crimes" under international standards for applying the death penalty, as this is limited to crimes involving intentional killing. These include "adultery", armed robbery, "apostasy", drug smuggling, rape, "witchcraft" and "sorcery". Some of these offences, such as "adultery" and "apostasy", should not even be criminalized at all. At least one person has been executed for witchcraft and sorcery in 2014.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Name: Hajras bin Saleh bin Muhammad al-Qurey

Gender m/f: m

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