

# URGENT ACTION

## JUVENILE ACTIVIST'S DEATH SENTENCE UPHeld

**A Saudi Arabian Shi'a activist has had his death sentence upheld. The offences he "confessed" to had taken place when he was 17 years old. He has exhausted his appeals and may be executed as soon as the King ratifies the sentence.**

**Ali Mohammed Baqir al-Nimr** was sentenced to death on 27 May 2014. He "confessed" to offences that had taken place when he was 17 years old. The sentence has now been upheld by appeal judges at the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) and by the Supreme Court, according to his family, who have only just learned of the courts' decisions. The case was sent to the Ministry of Interior in August 2015 for the sentence to be implemented. He is liable to be executed as soon as the King has ratified the sentence.

Ali al-Nimr was sentenced to death on 27 May 2014 by the SCC in Jeddah, for offences that included taking part in demonstrations against the government, attacking the security forces, possessing a machine-gun and armed robbery. The court seems to have based its decision on "confessions" which Ali al-Nimr has said were extracted under torture and other ill-treatment and has refused to look into this allegation.

Ali al-Nimr had been arrested on 14 February 2012, when he was 17 years old, and taken to the General Directorate of Investigations (GDI) prison in Dammam, in the Eastern Province. He was not allowed to see his lawyer and has said that GDI officers tortured him to make him sign a "confession". He was then taken to a centre for juvenile rehabilitation, Dar al-Mulahaza, and was returned to the GDI prison in Dammam when he turned 18.

Ali al-Nimr is the nephew of a prominent Shi'a cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, from al-Awamiyya in Qatif, eastern Saudi Arabia, who was sentenced to death by the Specialized Criminal Court on 15 October 2014.

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

- Urging the authorities to quash Ali Mohammed Baqir al-Nimr's conviction and death sentence, and ensure that he receives a fair trial in line with international law and standards and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Calling on them to open an independent investigation into his allegation of torture and other ill-treatment;
- Reminding them that Saudi Arabia is a state party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which strictly prohibits the use of the death penalty for crimes committed by anyone below the age of 18;
- 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 28 OCTOBER 2015 TO:**

#### King and Prime Minister

His Majesty Salman 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)  
Twitter: @KingSalman  
**Salutation: Your Majesty**

#### Minister of Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud  
Minister of Interior  
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:**

President, Human Rights Commission  
Bandar Mohammed 'Abdullah al-Aiban  
Human Rights Commission  
PO Box 58889, Riyadh 11515  
King Fahd Road  
Building No. 3, Riyadh  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Fax: +966 11 418 5101  
Email: info@hrc.gov.sa

### **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. This is the first update of UA 143/14. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/014/2014/en/>

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INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## JUVENILE ACTIVIST'S DEATH SENTENCE UPHELD

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia is one of the most prolific executioners in the world, putting more than 2,200 people to death between 1985 and 2015. Between January and the end of August 2015, it executed at least 130 people, almost half of them for offences that do not meet the threshold of "most serious crimes" for which the death penalty can be imposed under international law.

Saudi Arabia also sentences people to death, and executes them, for crimes committed when they were below 18 years of age, in violation of the country's obligations under customary international law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The authorities repeatedly fail to abide by international standards for fair trial and UN Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty. Too often trials in death penalty cases are held in secret and their proceedings are unfair and summary, with no legal assistance or representation through the various stages of detention and trial. Defendants may be convicted solely on the basis of "confessions" obtained under torture or other ill-treatment, duress or deception.

Tensions between members of the Shi'a Muslim community and the Saudi Arabian authorities have increased since 2011 when, inspired in part by protests that swept the Middle East and North Africa region, Saudi Arabians in the Kingdom's predominantly Shi'a Eastern Province stepped up public calls for reforms. Since 2011, demonstrations have also been organized to protest against the arrest, imprisonment and harassment of members of the Shi'a community for holding collective prayer meetings, celebrating Shi'a Muslim religious festivals and breaching restrictions on building Shi'a mosques.

The Saudi Arabian authorities have responded with repressive measures against those suspected of taking part in or supporting protests or expressing views critical of the state. Protesters have been held without charge and incommunicado for days or weeks at a time, and some are reported to have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Nearly 20 people connected with protests in the Eastern Province have been killed since 2011 and hundreds have been imprisoned. Of those whose cases have moved to the courts, many have been charged solely with taking part in demonstrations.

Among those held and later prosecuted by the Saudi Arabian authorities are two Shi'a religious clerics, Sheikh Tawfiq Jaber Ibrahim al-'Amr and Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, detained in August 2011 and July 2012 respectively.

Sheikh Tawfiq al-'Amr was sentenced by the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) on 13 August 2014 to eight years in prison, to be followed by a 10-year ban on travelling overseas and delivering religious sermons or public speeches. His sentence was upheld by the appeal division of the SCC on 6 January. The court had found him guilty of inciting sectarianism, defaming the country's ruling system, ridiculing the mentality of its religious leaders, calling for change and disobeying the ruler.

Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr was sentenced to death by the SCC on 15 October 2014 for a list of offences including "disobeying and breaking allegiance to the ruler", "calling to overthrow the regime", "calling for demonstrations", "inciting sectarian strife", "questioning the integrity of the judiciary" and "interfering in a neighbouring state's affairs" (meaning Bahrain). His trial that began at the SCC on 25 March 2013 was deeply flawed. He was denied the most basic needs to prepare his defence, including regular access to his lawyer and a pen and paper to respond to the charges. Key eyewitnesses were permitted by the court not to testify or be cross-examined by the defence, in violation of Saudi Arabian laws, and his lawyer was not informed of the dates of a number of court hearings.

Name: Ali Mohammed Baqir al-Nimr  
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 43/14 Index: MDE 23/2452/2015 Issue Date: 16 September 2015