

PUBLIC

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19 November 2007

UA 335/07 Imminent Execution

PAKISTAN Aurangzeb (m)

Aurangzeb (alias Rangoo, son of Karam Ali) is to be executed by hanging on January 2 in the district jail of Gujranwala. Aurangzeb's age could not be confirmed but he is believed to be in his late twenties. He was convicted of murdering a man called Imtiaz Ahmed in a village near the town of Mandi Bahuddin in central Punjab province more than 10 years ago.

Aurangzeb and his co-accused Mazhar were sentenced to death by an anti-terrorism court in Gujranwala in 1998. On appeal in 2000, the Lahore High Court commuted their death sentences to life imprisonment, but on the second appeal in 2006 the Supreme Court converted Aurangzeb's life sentence to the death sentence. On 6 November 2007, President Musharraf rejected Aurangzeb's mercy petition, but later stayed the execution for 15 days.

The stay of execution expired on 11 December and the anti-terrorism court in Gujranwala has now scheduled the execution for 2 January. He is currently held in detention on death row in the district jail of Gujranwala.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to human rights groups in Pakistan, at least 193 people were sentenced to death in 2007 and at least 124 were executed in Pakistan, including one juvenile. In 2006, Amnesty International found that at least 446 people were sentenced to death in Pakistan and at least 82, including a juvenile, were executed. Most had been found guilty of murder. Many more wealthy individuals convicted of similar crimes are able to escape punishment under provisions of a law known as the Qisas and Diyat, which allows the legal heirs of murder victims to accept compensation for the killing, and pardon the offender.

On 18 December 2007 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on a worldwide moratorium on the use of the death penalty. The votes were 104 in favour, 54 against, with 29 abstentions. The government of Pakistan voted against the resolution.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases. The death penalty is a symptom of a culture of violence, and not a solution to it. It has not been shown to have any greater deterrent effect than other punishments, and carries the risk of irrevocable error. The death penalty is the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and a violation of the right to life, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

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

- calling on the President to use his powers under Article 45 of the Constitution to commute the death sentence handed down to Aurangzeb;
- calling on the other authorities not to execute Aurangzeb;

- calling for an immediate moratorium on all executions in the country, in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on executions adopted on 18 December 2007, reinforcing the worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

President Pervez Musharraf
Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan

Fax: +92 51 9221422

E-mail: via website: <http://www.presidentofpakistan.gov.pk/WTPresidentMessage.aspx>

Salutation: Dear General Musharraf

Minister for the Interior
Ministry for the Interior
Room 404, 4th Floor, Block R, Federal Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 9202624

E-mail: minister@interior.gov.pk
/secretary@interior.gov

Salutation: Dear Minister

Syed Afzal Haider
Minister of Law, Justice and Human Rights
Room 305, S-Block, Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan

Fax: +92 51 9202628 /+92 51 9201631

E-Mail: minister@molaw.gov.pk

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.