

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Penalty

3 August 1992

IRAQ: Ra'ad Tabra
Mahmud al-Rahmani
Salim Hamra Abd al-Hadi Hamra, 65, former head Baghdad Chamber
of Commerce
Tareq Hamra
Hazem Hamra, 28
Najah Mahdi Saleh Kubba
Qassem 'Arab
Ahmad Malallah
Ahmad Muhyi al-Haj Radi, early 40s
Jassem Mir 'Ali
Taha Hussain al-Gat
Saffar Jamal Abul-Jubn
Mustafa Buniyya

Amnesty International is concerned about reports of the execution in Iraq of as many as twenty merchants reportedly charged with profiteering. According to information received the executions were carried out by hanging on 26 July 1992 in Baghdad.

A number of those executed belong to prominent merchant families, both Sunni and Shi'a and were said to be part of a larger group of merchants, traders and businessmen arrested on 25 July 1992 in a crackdown on Iraqi citizens suspected of fixing the price of goods differently to those specified by the state.

It is unclear whether the executions were carried out in public but reports indicate that the bodies of some of the victims were displayed in a market place in Baghdad to serve as a lesson to others.

President Saddam Hussain appeared to allude to the executions in a speech given at an award ceremony on the same day. He said that "regrettably some merchants harmed the relationship with (the state)..." and stated that "...the law is used to break the necks of those who do not deserve to remain alive...". He also implied that some form of trial had taken place before the executions; "On my way here, some officials asked that others stand trial. My answer was no."

At present Amnesty International has no details of where the other merchants arrested are being detained and the conditions of their detention.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send airmail letters:

- expressing concern about the reported execution of as many as 20 merchants

in Baghdad on 26 July;

- requesting their names, details of the charges against them and of the legal procedures followed in their cases;

- requesting the names and details of others arrested on similar charges on 25 July, their places of detention and details of any legal procedures being followed in their cases;

- appealing for the commutation of any other death sentences passed.

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APPEALS TO:

1) H.E. President Saddam Hussain
President of the Republic

2) H.E. Muhammad Hamza al-Zubaidi
Prime Minister

3) H.E. Tariq Aziz
Deputy Prime Minister

4) H.E. Ahmed Hussain
Minister of Foreign Affairs

All appeals should be sent c/o:

H.E. Dr Abdul Amir al-Anbari
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations
14 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Diplomatic representatives of Iraq accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 September 1992.