

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 14/015/2005

01 June 2005

UA 146/05

Death penalty

IRAQ

Iyad Salman (m)
Mohammad 'Ali Ghodhban (m)
As'ad Du'ayfus (m)

The three men named above were sentenced to death on 31 May by the Central Criminal Court in Baghdad. They had reportedly been convicted of killing an official from the Interior Ministry, 'Abdul Muhsin 'Ali 'Abd al-Sada. He was shot dead in Baghdad on 28 April, by three men, while he was on his way to work in Baghdad. According to local press reports the three men have been given one month to appeal.

Amnesty International does not have any further details of the case, but is opposed to the use of the death penalty in any circumstances, as it is a cruel and inhuman punishment that has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than any other method.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which was set up in April 2003, in the aftermath of the US-led invasion of Iraq, handed over power to an interim Iraqi government at the end of June 2004. The CPA had suspended the death penalty in June 2003, but the interim government reinstated it on 8 August 2004 for crimes such as murder, drug trafficking and kidnapping. The authorities justified the reintroduction of the death penalty as a measure to deal with the deteriorating security situation in the country.

A new government led by Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Ja'afari was formed in early May 2005. Since then seven people have been sentenced to death in connection with serious human rights abuses committed by armed groups opposed to the government and the presence of foreign troops in Iraq.

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

- expressing concern that Iyad Salman, Mohammad 'Ali Ghodhban and As'ad Du'ayfus were sentenced to death on 31 May, and urging the authorities to commute their sentences;
- asking for details of their trials and appeals, with a view to establishing whether these complied with international standards for fair trial;
- condemning all abuses, including killing of civilians and officials, and urging that those responsible for these abuses be brought to justice in trials that fall within international standards for fair trial and that do not impose the death penalty;
- acknowledging the seriousness of the security situation, but pointing out that the death penalty has never proved to be an effective deterrent to crime, and calling for the death penalty to be abolished in law and practice.

APPEALS TO: Fax numbers and e-mail addresses for the Iraqi authorities are not available. Please send appeals via the Iraqi embassy or diplomatic representative in your country, asking them to forward your appeals to:

President of the Republic of Iraq
Jalal Talabani

Salutation: Your Excellency

Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq
Dr. Ibrahim al-Ja'afari
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Ask for the Iraqi embassy or diplomatic representative to send copies to:

- Human Rights Minister

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