

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 23/06/96

31 May 1996

Further information on EXTRA 80/96 (MDE 23/04/96, 28 May 1996) - Risk of execution / Legal and Torture Concerns

**SAUDI ARABIA'Abd al-'Aziz Naser al-Mi'tham, businessman, aged 24
Riyad Suleyman Is-Haq al-Hajri, aged 24
Muslih Ali 'A'idh al-Shamrani, former state employee, aged 28
Khalid Ahmad Ibrahim al-Sa'id, businessman, aged 24
and possibly others**

Amnesty International is outraged by the execution of the above four prisoners in Riyadh on 31 May 1996. The organization considers their executions to have been summary and arbitrary and a flagrant violation of international human rights standards.

As was detailed in the original EXTRA of 28 May, the four victims were shown on Saudi Arabian television on 22 April "confessing" to having carried out the bombing of the Saudi Arabian National Guard training centre in Riyadh in November 1995. On the same day the Minister of Interior, Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz, announced that the four would be tried and punished in accordance with the law, thereby suggesting that the four had not yet been tried. Their execution followed 40 days later.

Amnesty International, while recognizing the right of states to bring to justice anyone suspected of a recognizably criminal offence, pointed out to the Saudi Arabian Government that such prisoners' right to fair trial should not be compromised under any circumstances. Specifically, Amnesty International had appealed to the government to withdraw the "confessions" and to ensure the four had a fair trial in accordance with the 1984 UN Safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of prisoners facing the death penalty.

The organization also called on President Bill Clinton to clarify the US Government's position on a statement by the ambassador to Saudi Arabia, reported by Reuters, in which he appeared to back unfair trial procedures followed in the case of the four (see original EXTRA).

The execution of the four prisoners in such a short period, 40 days after the Minister announced that they would be tried, can in no way be considered to be adequate time to ensure fair trial. Amnesty International does not know if a trial took place. Further, and as a practice in Saudi Arabia, prisoners facing the death penalty are invariably denied the right to be defended by lawyers during trial hearings. Furthermore, confessions in such trials, even when obtained under torture, are accepted by courts as evidence, and may be the sole evidence upon which conviction is based.

On the basis of the above evidence, it is Amnesty International's conclusion that the executions were summary and arbitrary. The organization strongly condemns the execution of the four, and remains gravely concerned that other prisoners suspected in connection with the said bombings may be at risk of such summary and arbitrary execution.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or in your own language:
to Saudi authorities:**

- expressing outrage at the execution of 'Abd al-'Aziz Naser al-Mi'tham, Riyadh Suleyman Is-Haq al-Hajri, Muslih Ali 'A'idh al-Shamrani, and Khalid Ahmad Ibrahim al-Sa'id on 31 May 1996;
- stating the view that these executions were summary and arbitrary and a flagrant violation of international human rights standards;
- calling on the authorities to take immediate action to ensure that international safeguards for defendants charged with capital offences are adhered to in Saudi Arabia;

to President Clinton:

- reiterating calls for clarification on the USA's position on the reported statement by the ambassador to Saudi Arabia in which he appeared to back the unfair trial procedure in this case, which has now resulted in the summary and arbitrary execution of four men;
- calling on the President to publicly condemn these executions.

APPEALS TO:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Office of H.M. The King
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior
His Royal Highness
Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Ministry of the Interior
PO Box 2833
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 404416
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Head of State, USA
President Bill Clinton
Office of the President, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave,
Washington DC 20500
Faxes: +1 202 456 2461
Telegrams: President Clinton, Washington, USA
Telephone: +1 202 456 1414
Telexes: ITT 440074
Salutation: Dear Mr President

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia and USA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.