

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 23/06/97

3 July 1997

Further information on EXTRA 43/97 (MDE 23/03/97, 25 March 1997) and follow-up (MDE 23/04/97, 23 May) - Fear of increase in executions

SAUDI ARABIA Sarah Dematera (f), Filipino national  
and others on death row

new case: 21 Pakistani nationals, including women and children

Executions are continuing at an alarming rate in Saudi Arabia, with a total of 59 people having been executed so far in 1997, as recorded by Amnesty International. The organization remains gravely concerned that more prisoners on death row may be facing imminent execution.

All those executed so far in 1997 had been convicted of criminal offences, such as murder, drug smuggling, armed robbery or rape. No information was made public about their trials and conviction as it is a practice in Saudi Arabia to only announce executions once they have been carried out.

The fate of Sarah Dematera, a Filipino national convicted of murdering her employer in 1992, remains unclear. The Saudi Arabian authorities have failed to respond to repeated requests by Amnesty International, including members of the Urgent Action Network, for clarification of her sentence.

Those at risk of execution may also include some of a group of 21 Pakistani nationals, reportedly including women and children, who were arrested on 22 January 1997, allegedly for the possession of drugs. No information has been made public about them by the Saudi Arabian Government since their arrest. However, as drug offences are mandatorily punishable by death in Saudi Arabia, after trials which pay no attention to international standards, Amnesty International fears that they are in real danger of execution. The organization recently conveyed this concern to the Saudi Arabian Government and sought clarification of the current legal status of these individuals, but has so far received no response.

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

- voicing unconditional opposition to the death penalty, and expressing grave concern that executions are continuing to be carried out at an alarming rate in Saudi Arabia;
- calling for an immediate halt to further executions, and urging the authorities to commute all outstanding death sentences to a more humane punishment;
- reiterating requests for clarification of the current legal status of Sarah Dematera, and of the 21 Pakistani nationals, including women and children, some of whom may be at risk of being executed;
- pointing out that under Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Saudi Arabia recently acceded, capital punishment cannot be imposed for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age;

**if possible, also:**

- call for strict observance during trial of international safeguards for defendants charged with capital offences, noting the recent resolution on the death penalty made by the 1997 Commission on Human Rights, which 'calls upon all States that still maintain the death penalty to observe the UN Safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty',

and also 'calls upon States that still retain the death penalty to make available to the public information with regard to the imposition of the death penalty';

**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: Minister of the Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Telexes: 404416**  
**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
His Royal Highness  
Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz  
Nasseriya Street, Riyadh 11124  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
**Telegrams: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Telexes: 405000**  
**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

Minister of Justice  
His Excellency  
Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh  
Ministry of Justice  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
**Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**Telexes: 403970**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 August 1997.