

UA 236/99

Sharp inc.

SAUDI ARABIAJuma'a Bin Salah El-Din, Nigerian national
Attallah Esmattallah, Afghan national
Abdellatif bin Mohammad al-Utaibi, Saudi Arabian national
Awadh bin Mohammed Qahtani, Saudi Arabian national

The number of executions in Saudi Arabia has increased alarmingly: so far this year there have been 78 executions, 70 of them in the past five months, compared to 29 in the whole of 1998. The four people named above were the latest to be put to death, on 10 September 1999.

Six foreign nationals were executed in 1998. So far this year, 55 foreign nationals have been put to death, including 11 Pakistanis, 10 Nigerians, eight Afghans and five Indians. The others were Indonesian, Thai, Syrian, Jordanian, Ethiopian, Chadian and Yemeni. Among the Nigerians were three women, Hawa Faruk, Aisha Saada Kassem and Safira Ounbiyi Salami, executed for drug trafficking.

An official account of how many people are on death row, or when they are due to be executed, is not available. However, Amnesty International is gravely concerned that 59 people are reportedly facing charges that carry the death penalty. Amnesty International has sought clarification and further details about these people from the Saudi Arabian government. Among those reportedly sentenced to death is Abdul Karim Vastel (see UA 54/99, MDE 23/01/99. 20 April 1999).

Amnesty International is concerned that capital trials in Saudi Arabia do not comply with internationally recognised standards, including the 1984 United Nations Safeguards guaranteeing the protection of those facing the death penalty and Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Defendants do not have the right to formal representation by defence lawyers; foreign nationals reportedly are not always provided with adequate interpretation facilities and access to consular assistance; and confessions can be used as the sole basis for convictions. Even confessions obtained under torture are sometimes used, despite Saudi Arabia's accession to the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Punishment in September 1997.

While recognising the right and responsibility of all governments to bring to justice those guilty of recognisably criminal offences, Amnesty International defends the fundamental, internationally recognised rights of all people, including the right to life and the right to freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, as enshrined in Articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing dismay at the increased use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, and calling for an immediate halt to executions and the commutation of all outstanding death sentences;
- calling for clarification of reports that 59 people in prisons in Saudi Arabia are facing charges which carry the death penalty;
- urging that international standards for capital trials are strictly observed.

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 the Interior
His Royal Highness, Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior
PO Box 2833, Airport Road,
Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
**Faxes: + 966 1403 1185 (this is a telephone and fax, please ask to be connected
to the fax if a voice answers)**
Telexes: 404416
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice
His Excellency
Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 405 980 MINJUS SJ
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Information
His Excellency Dr. Fuad Abdul Salam Al-Farsi
Minister of Information, Ministry of Information
PO Box 843, Riyadh 11161,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telex: 401641 ARINFOR SJ
402640 MINMO SJ
Fax: + 966 1 402 3570/405 0674
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 25 October 1999.