

URGENT ACTION

TURKISH MAN AT RISK OF BEHEADING

A 29-year-old Turkish man, Ali Agirdas, is at imminent risk of beheading in Saudi Arabia. His sentence is being considered by the Supreme Judicial Council, which is headed by the King. Ali Agirdas could be executed at any time if the Council approves his sentence.



Ali Agirdas was arrested on 24 February 2007 for smuggling drugs in Riyadh and was convicted and sentenced to death by a General Court in Riyadh on 18 June 2008. His sentence was upheld on appeal. His case now has to be considered by the Supreme Judicial Council, which can approve death sentences or send them back to the Court of Cassation for review.

During his trial, Ali Agirdas was informed by the judge that he had signed a confession in Arabic, a language which he cannot read but can speak limited Arabic, stating he knew he was carrying drugs when he was arrested. He did not have an interpreter or a lawyer during his interrogation. Ali Agirdas had told the interrogator that he did not know about the drugs. However the interrogator presented him with a document in Arabic which was the written confession and said that it would help his case. Ali Agirdas told the court that he had not known what was in the document. He was convicted on the basis of this confession.

Ali Agirdas did not have a lawyer during his trial but did have an interpreter. He however did have a lawyer during his appeal. He is held in al-Hair prison in the capital city of Riyadh, in Saudi Arabia.

Prisoners in Saudi Arabia may be put to death without a scheduled date for execution being made known to them or their families.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the King to halt the execution of Ali Agirdas;
- Noting that he was convicted on the basis of a confession which he signed without understanding what it said and as such should be provided with a retrial that adheres to international fair trial standards including the UN Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, which state that capital punishment may only be imposed after a fair trial in which the defendant is provided with "adequate legal assistance at all stages of the proceedings."
- Calling on him to commute Ali Agirdas's death sentence, and those of all others under sentence of death in Saudi Arabia, as a matter of urgency, with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 DECEMBER 2009 TO:

King and Prime Minister

His Majesty King 'Abdullah Bin 'Abdul
'Aziz Al-Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior)

+966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Majesty

Second Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin
'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud, Ministry of the
Interior, P.O. Box 2933, Airport Road
Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

And copies to:

President, Human Rights Commission

Mr Bandar Mohammed 'Abdullah al-Aiban

Human Rights Commission
P.O. Box 58889, King Fahad Road,
Building No. 373, Riyadh 11515
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 1 461 2061

Email: hrc@haq-ksa.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At least 158 people were executed in 2007, and at least 102 in 2008. Since the beginning of 2009, a further 61 people are known to have been executed.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences, including some with no lethal consequences. Court proceedings fall far short of international standards for fair trial. Defendants are rarely allowed formal representation by a lawyer, and in many cases are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. They may be convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress or deception.

In a report on the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, Amnesty International highlighted the extensive use of the death penalty as well as the disproportionately high number of executions of foreign nationals from developing countries. For further information please see *Saudi Arabia: Affront to Justice: Death Penalty in Saudi Arabia* (Index: MDE 23/027/2008), 14 October 2008: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/saudi-arabia-executions-target-foreign-nationals-20081014>

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