

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 23/035/2008

08 August 2008

UA

Risk of Imminent Execution

SAUDI ARABIA 'Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri, aged about 36 (m)]
Qassim Bin Rida Bin Sulayman al Mahdi aged about 24 (m)] Saudi Arabian nationals
Khalid Bin Muhammad 'Issa al-Qadihi aged about 27 (m)]

Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri, Qassim Bin Rida Bin Sulayman al Mahdi and Khalid Bin Muhammad 'Issa al-Qadihi are at risk of execution after their death sentences were recently confirmed. The Ministry of the Interior now has responsibility for implementing the sentences. The schedule for the executions could be decided without the prisoners or their relatives being informed until the day of the executions.

The men were arrested in 2004 and convicted and sentenced to death on drug smuggling charges. The confessions on which their guilt was ascertained were extracted under torture and other ill-treatment. During the interrogation the men were held incommunicado and were denied legal assistance. They were convicted and sentenced after three short trial sessions with no legal assistance or representation.

Qassim Bin Rida Bin Sulayman al Mahdi and Khalid Bin Muhammad 'Issa al-Qadihi were sentenced to death and 'Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and 5,000 lashes. The three men lodged an appeal to the sentences with the Court of Cassation. The court reviewed the case and requested a reduction in the men's sentences on the grounds that the defendants had no prior criminal record and were all young. In spite of the Court of Cassation's decision, the Lower Court increased 'Ali Hassan'Issa al-Buri's sentence to death.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences, including offences with no lethal consequences, and it is imposed following trials which invariably fail to meet the most basic international standards of fair trial. Court hearings are often held in secret and defendants are scarcely permitted formal representation by a lawyer. They may be convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress, torture or deception. In many cases defendants and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. Prisoners under sentence of death may not be informed of the date of execution until the morning of the execution.

At least 66 people have been executed this year in Saudi Arabia however, the true figure may be much higher.

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

- expressing concern that Ali Hassan 'Issa al-Buri, Qassim Bin Rida Bin Sulayman al Mahdi and Khalid Bin Muhammad 'Issa al-Qadihi are at risk of imminent execution after an unfair trial;
- reminding the authorities that they must comply with international standards for fair trial, including the United Nations safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, which guarantees adequate opportunity for defence, appeal and prohibits the imposition of the death penalty when there is room for alternative interpretation of the evidence;

- urging the King to commute their sentences without delay.

APPEALS TO:

Please note that you may experience difficulties sending faxes on Thursdays and Fridays, which is the weekend in Saudi Arabia.

His Majesty King Abdullah Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
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Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior) +966 1 403 1185 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
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COPIES TO:

Mr Turki bin Khaled Al-Sudairy
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and 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 19 September.