

URGENT ACTION

THREE AT RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION

Three men may be at imminent risk of execution in Saudi Arabia for drugs offences. They have exhausted all their appeals and could be executed in the coming days.

Saudi Arabian nationals **Qassem bin Rida bin Salman al-Mahdi, Khaled bin Muhammad bin Issa al-Qudaihi** and **Ali Hassan Issa al-Buri**, were arrested in July 2004 on suspicion of smuggling drugs. On 2 October 2005, the General Court in Qurrayat in the northern province of al-Jouf sentenced Qassem bin Rida bin Salman al-Mahdi and Khaled bin Muhammad bin Issa al-Qudaihi to death, while Ali Hassan Issa al-Buri received a sentence of 20 years in prison and 4,000 lashes. All three appeared not to have had access to a lawyer in pre-trial detention and during their trial, and some reportedly made "confessions" under duress. An appeal was submitted to the Court of Cassation in Riyadh, which twice ordered the General Court in Qurrayat to commute all three sentences. Instead, the General Court upheld its verdict and amended Ali Hassan Issa al-Buri's sentence to the death penalty. In 2007 the Supreme Judicial Council upheld the death sentences in all three cases and referred them to the King, who is believed to have ratified the sentences. Their executions could take place at any time.

Death sentences imposed for drugs-related offences do not fall into the category of "most serious crimes" embodied in international standards such as the UN Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 25 May 1984 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly on 14 December 1984.. These guarantee the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, and require that the scope of crimes punishable by death "should not go beyond intentional crimes with lethal or other extremely grave consequences."

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the King to halt the execution of Qassem bin Rida bin Salman al-Mahdi, Khaled bin Muhammad bin Issa al-Qudaihi and Ali Hassan Issa al-Buri;
- Calling on the King to commute the death sentences 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;
- Reminding the authorities that, pending full abolition, they should act in accordance with international minimum standards and limit the use of the death penalty to "most serious crimes", which do not include drugs-related offences, and should abide fully with 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".

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 MARCH 2012 TO:

King

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 3125 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

Crown Prince 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 3125 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

And copies to:

Governor of al-Jouf Province
His Highness Prince Fahed Bin Bader bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Sakaka, al-Jouf Province
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Email: 61300@aljouf.gov.sa

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

So far this year, at least six people have been executed in Saudi Arabia, three of them for drug-related offences. Amnesty International is seriously concerned about over 100 prisoners who are currently known to be under sentence of death in the country.

Amnesty International has recorded some 80 executions for 2011, around triple the figure of 27 for 2010. In 2009, at least 69 people are known to have been executed, in 2008 at least 102, and in 2007 at least 158.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences. 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 published in 2008 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>

Name: Qassem bin Rida bin Salman al-Mahdi, Khaled bin Muhammad bin Issa al-Qudaihi and Ali Hassan Issa al-Buri
Gender m/f: M

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