

# URGENT ACTION

## SAUDI ARABIAN KING SHOULD PARDON “SORCERER”

**Abdul Hamid al-Fakki, a Sudanese man sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia in 2007 for “sorcery”, should be pardoned by the Saudi Arabian King in the coming month. During Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting which this year lasts from 11 August until around 9 September, Saudi Arabia's King often pardons prisoners. Amnesty International is calling on him to take this opportunity to commute the death sentence of Abdul Hamid al-Fakki.**

‘Abdul Hamid bin Hussain bin Moustafa al-Fakki, who is aged about 36, was arrested on 8 December 2005 in the western city of Madina by members of the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (CPVPV), also known as the Mutawa’een (religious police). He was accused of practicing sorcery, after a man working for the CPVPV entrapped him by asking him to produce a spell that would lead to the man’s father leaving his second wife. ‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki apparently said he would do this in exchange for 6,000 Saudi Arabian riyals (approximately US\$1,600). Following his arrest, he was questioned and reportedly beaten, and is believed to have been coerced to confess to carrying out acts of sorcery.

‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki was sentenced to death by the General Court in Madina on 27 March 2007 for sorcery. He had no legal assistance and very little is known about his trial proceedings as they were held in secret. Amnesty International believes he could be at imminent risk of execution. He is still held in Madina Prison.

During the month of Ramadan, Saudi Arabian authorities enforce a moratorium on executions and the King often announces a number of amnesties and pardons for prisoners. The King should take such an opportunity to commute the death sentence of ‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki and release him immediately and unconditionally if he has been convicted solely for acts amounting to the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the King of Saudi Arabia during the month of Ramadan to commute the death sentence of ‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki;
- Urging the King to release ‘Abdul Hamid al-Fakki immediately and unconditionally if he has been convicted solely for acts amounting to the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion;
- Urging the authorities stop charging and convicting people with “sorcery” for acts which are a peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 09 SEPTEMBER 2010 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 1185 (please keep trying)**  
**Salutation: Your Majesty**

#### And copies to:

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**

#### Copies also to:

President, Human Rights Commission  
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](mailto:hrc@haq-ksa.org)**  
**Salutation: Dear Mr al-Aiban**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 114/10 (MDE 23/008/2010). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/008/2010/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The crime of “sorcery” is not defined in Saudi Arabian law and, as such, has been used unlawfully to punish people for the peaceful exercise of their human rights, including the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, belief and expression.

The Saudi Arabian authorities arrested scores of people for “sorcery” in 2009, and have arrested more this year. A number of them were arrested by the Mutawa’een. The last known execution for “sorcery” was that of Egyptian national Mustafa Ibrahim, on 2 November 2007. He had been arrested in May 2007 in the town of ‘Arar, where he worked as a pharmacist, and accused of “apostasy” for having degraded a copy of the Qur’an by putting it in a toilet. He was convicted however and sentenced to death for practicing sorcery and witchcraft in June 2007.

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. Since the beginning of 2010, at least 17 people have been executed.

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, 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>

Further information on UA: 114/10 Index: MDE 23/009/2010 Issue Date: 17 August 2010

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