

URGENT ACTION

SAUDI ARABIAN BROTHERS AT RISK OF EXECUTION

Two Saudi Arabian brothers are at imminent risk of execution in Saudi Arabia. They have exhausted all their appeals and the King is said to have ratified their death sentences. The number of executions in Saudi Arabia has significantly increased in recent weeks. At least 27 people have been executed so far this year, 15 in May alone.

Two Saudi Arabian brothers, **Muhammad Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id**, aged 54, married with five children, and **Sa'ud Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id**, aged 47, married with three children, were sentenced to death in late December 1998 by a court in Makkah, for the murder of another Saudi Arabian man. In late April 2011, their sentences were said to have been ratified by the King. It is not known when they will be executed but it is feared that they could be executed at any time.

They did not have access to a lawyer during their pre-trial investigation or their trial. Furthermore, it appears that Sa'ud Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id confessed to the murder under duress as the authorities reportedly arrested his elderly father in order to put pressure on him.

Under Saudi Arabian law, those found guilty in murder cases are often sentenced to *qisas* (retribution in kind). In these cases, the relatives of the victim have the power to seek execution, request *diya* (compensation) or grant a pardon freely. The relatives of the murder victim must reach adulthood before they decide on the fate of those found guilty of murder. Muhammad Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id and Sa'ud Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id had remained on death row since 1998 as the children of the murder victim were too young to be consulted about whether they were to be pardoned or executed. By 2009, all the children had reached the age of majority and are reported to have informed the court which tried him that they want them to be executed.

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

- Urging the King to halt the execution of Muhammad Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id and Sa'ud Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id;
- 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 they should act in accordance with international standards for fair trial, 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".

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 JULY 2011 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**

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 3125 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

And copies 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
Email: hrc@haq-ksa.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Despite a decrease in executions in the last few years, there has been a marked increase in executions this year with no less than 15 people executed in May alone. So far this year, 27 people have been executed, equalling the total number of people executed in the whole of 2010. Amnesty International is seriously concerned about over 100 prisoners who are currently known to be under sentence of death in Saudi Arabia.

At least 158 people were executed by the Saudi Arabian authorities in 2007, and at least 102 people were executed in 2008. In 2009, at least 69 people are known to have been executed.

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>

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