

URGENT ACTION

TWO BROTHERS PUT TO DEATH

Brothers Muhammad Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id and Sa'ud Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id were executed on 30 July.

The two brothers, who were both married with children, had been sentenced to death in late December 1998 by a court in Mecca, for the murder of another man. Their sentences were ratified in late April 2011 by the King.

According to the lawyers who assisted the men after they were sentenced to death, the families of the two brothers were not officially informed of the execution by the Saudi Arabian authorities and as such did not have an opportunity to pay either of the two men a farewell visit. The execution was carried out by beheading in the morning of 30 July in a public place in Ta'if, a city in the Mecca province.

The death sentences had been imposed after what appear to have been unfair trial proceedings. According to the lawyers who assisted them after they were sentenced, neither brother had access to a lawyer at the original trial and Sa'ud Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id confessed to the murder under duress: the authorities arrested his elderly father to put pressure on him.

The two brothers had spent 14 years in prison in Ta'if waiting for the children of the man who was killed to reach adulthood. This is because, under Saudi Arabian law, the relatives of a murder victim have to reach the age of majority before they can be consulted on whether they wish to seek execution, request *djya* (compensation) or grant a pardon. According to a reliable source, all the children had reached the age of majority by 2009 and subsequently told the court that they wanted Muhammad Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id and Sa'ud Jaber Sahbah al-Ja'id to be executed.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the second update of UA 176/11. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/011/2011/en and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/017/2011/en>

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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 15 people put to death in May alone. So far this year, 37 people have been executed, more than were 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 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 lawyers, 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: Muhammad Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id and Sa'ud Jaber Shahbah al-Ja'id

Gender m/f: Both male

Further information on UA: 176/11 Index: MDE 23/018/2011 Issue Date: 2 August 2011