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Bahrain: Amnesty International deplores first executions for 10 years

Amnesty International deplores the executions yesterday, 11 December 2006, of two men and a woman, the first executions to be carried out in Bahrain since 1996.

Those executed were Mohammad Hanif Atta Mohammad, a national of Pakistan, and Jasmine Anwar Hussain and Mohammad Hilaluddin, both nationals of Bangladesh. All three had been convicted separately of murder. They were executed by firing squad.

Their death sentences were confirmed by Bahrain's head of state, King Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa, on 21 November, since when Amnesty International had been campaigning for their sentences to be commuted to prison terms.

Until this year, the death penalty has been rarely used in Bahrain and before yesterday's executions, only one person had been executed since 1977.

It is especially disappointing that Bahrain has ended its long de facto moratorium on executions in light of the Kingdom's recent election to the new UN Human Rights Council, whose members are expected to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, including by taking steps towards the abolition of the death penalty in law and practice. Amnesty International expresses sympathy with the victims of crime and their relatives but is opposed to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Background

Mohammad Hanif Atta Mohammad, a Pakistani national aged 37, was convicted of the murder of a Bahraini national in August 2003. He was alleged to have beaten the dead man and set light to his body and home. The dead man's wife was also implicated; she was convicted and received a 25-year prison sentence. The two were sentenced by the High Criminal Court and the sentences were upheld on appeal by the Cassation Court.

Jasmine Anwar Hussain, aged 23, a domestic worker, and Mohammad Hilaluddin, aged 33, were sentenced to death for the murder of a Bahraini woman in Buhair, near al-Manama, in November 2004, reportedly during an attempted robbery at her home. Their death sentences were confirmed on appeal in December 2005.

Issa Ahmad Qambar, a Bahraini national, was executed by firing squad in March 1996. He had been found guilty of the premeditated murder of a police officer.