

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Nigeria: Amina Lawal's appeal case to be heard on 27 August

After several adjournments, the hearing of Amina Lawal's appeal is due to take place on 27 August 2003 in her home state of Katsina, northern Nigeria. Amina Lawal and her lawyers are expected to be present at the hearing. The judicial process should follow its course if the quorum of judges is met this time.

Amnesty International continues to receive queries falsely claiming that Amina Lawal's execution is imminent - before or on 27 August - and referring to Amnesty International as a source.

No execution of the sentence is due before or on that date.

Amnesty International understands that Amina Lawal's right to legal representation and her right to appeal are guaranteed at this stage. She is not in detention and has good legal representation. She is also being supported by a coalition of Nigerian women's groups and human rights groups. Amnesty International is in close touch with these organizations.

"Unfortunately, this case has now been adjourned so many times that many of those who have campaigned for her sentence to be quashed cannot understand why a woman and her child can be put under so much duress. This is becoming a clear case of justice delayed is justice denied," Amnesty International said.

Background

Amina Lawal -- a Muslim woman -- was found guilty by a court in March 2002 after bearing a child outside marriage. Under "Sharia Penal Legislations" now in force in several northern Nigerian states, this was sufficient for her to be convicted of the crime of adultery and summoned to appear before a Sharia tribunal to respond to a "crime" which now carries a punishment of death by stoning according to new "Sharia penal legislations" introduced in Nigeria in 1999.

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