

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Sentence/Public Hanging

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PAKISTAN

Zafar Iqbal

Amnesty International is deeply disturbed by reports that Zafar Iqbal has been sentenced to death for the rape and murder of a teenage girl in the village of Chakwal, Punjab Province, and that the execution is to be carried out in public. Zafar Iqbal was sentenced to death by a Special Court for Speedy Trials in Rawalpindi in September after a trial lasting only three days; his appeal against the conviction was turned down on 11 October. According to the report, although no date for the execution has been set, preparations for the execution by hanging are being made in the main square of the town of Chakwal, 100 kilometres south of Islamabad.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On taking office in November 1990, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced a "crackdown" on what he believed to be an increasing wave of crime in the country.

This year the government has introduced legislation extending the death penalty to include kidnapping and abduction for ransom and reintroduced public hangings.

The last public hanging in Pakistan was carried out in 1980 in the Punjab capital of Lahore when three men were executed for killing a boy.

In August the 12th Amendment to the Constitution was passed providing for the setting up of about 11 Special Courts for Speedy Trials which are empowered to try crimes considered to be "gruesome, brutal and sensational in character". Amnesty International is concerned that these speedy courts do not conform to international standards for fair trial; the accused can be sentenced to death after a trial lasting only two to three days; no court adjournment can last for more than two days, a limitation which may affect the presentation of witnesses before the court; an appeal may be filed by the convicted person within seven days only and the Supreme Appellate Court which hears the appeal then has to come to a decision within 30 days. In October Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced that those people who were sentenced to death by the Special Courts for Speedy Trials would be hanged in public.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- appealing to President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to commute the death sentence given to Zafar Iqbal under the power granted to him in Article 45 of the Constitution;
- expressing concern that Zafar Iqbal was sentenced to death after a trial which lasted only three days, by a Special Court for Speedy Trials which does not conform to international standards for fair trial;
- expressing grave concern that Zafar Iqbal has been sentenced to be hanged in public and opposing this as the ultimate form of torture and degrading treatment;
- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of torture and as a violation of the right to life.

APPEALS TO

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan
The Presidency
Murree Brewery Road
Rawalpindi
Pakistan

Dear President

Telegrams: President, Rawalpindi President's House, Pakistan
Telexes: 54058 PSPUB PK

Mian Nawaz Sharif
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
Islamabad, Pakistan

Dear Prime Minister

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Islamabad, Pakistan

Mr Shujaat Hussain
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Pak Secretariat, Block R
Islamabad, Pakistan

Dear Minister

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Islamabad, Pakistan

Chaudhary Abdul Ghafoor
Minister of Law & Justice
Ministry of Law & Justice
Pak Secretariat, Blocks R & S
Islamabad, Pakistan

Dear Minister

Telegrams: Law & Justice Minister, Islamabad, Pakistan

Aziz A Munshi
Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
Islamabad, Pakistan

Dear Attorney General

Telegrams: Attorney General, Islamabad, Pakistan

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Pakistan in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 November 1991.