

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 33/27/97

4 August 1997

Further information on EXTRA 103/97 (ASA 33/23/97, 18 July 1997) and follow-up (ASA 33/26/97, 31 July) - Death penalty / Imminent execution

PAKISTAN Shamu Masih
Javed Masih

A new date for the execution of Shamu Masih and Javed Masih has been set for 20 August 1997. The two men were originally due to be executed on 18 July, but were granted a one-month stay of execution by the President of Pakistan.

A member of parliament, acting on behalf of the two men, reportedly appealed for the executions to be suspended on the grounds that relatives of the man Shamu Masih and Javed Masih were convicted of murdering have indicated that they may be ready to forgive the convicted men.

Shamu Masih and Javed Masih were sentenced to death under the Qisas and Diyat Ordinance which defines the offence and punishment of murder in Pakistan in terms of Islamic law. It stipulates that the victim's heirs have the right to pardon the convict or accept compensation.

The introduction of elements of Islamic law into the Pakistan Penal Code has severely limited the possibility of prisoners sentenced to death having their sentences commuted to life imprisonment by the state authorities under Pakistan's Code of Criminal Procedure. However, Article 45 of the Constitution laying down the powers of the President to commute death sentences remains unaffected.

Christian groups in Pakistan continue to call on the President to commute the death sentences against Shamu and Javed Masih. They are also appealing to the President to commute all death sentences to life imprisonment for death row prisoners on the occasion of Pakistan's Golden Jubilee year.

Please continue to send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

to President:

- continuing to appeal to the President to use his powers under Article 45 of the Constitution to commute the death sentences against Shamu Masih and Javed Masih;

to other two addressees:

- expressing concern that Shamu Masih and Javed Masih are scheduled for execution, and appealing to the Governor and Chief Minister to urge the President to commute the death sentences;

To all:

- continuing to urge that the death be abolished as it violates the right to life and the prohibition of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment;

APPEALS TO:

President Farooq Leghari
Office of the President
Islamabad, Pakistan
Telegrams: President, Islamabad, Pakistan
Faxes: 92 51 9211018
Salutation: Dear President

Governor of Sindh
Governor's House
Karachi, Pakistan
Telegrams: Governor, Karachi, Pakistan
Faxes: 92 21 9201218
Salutation: Dear Governor

Chief Minister of Sindh
Sindh Secretariat
Karachi, Pakistan
Telegrams: Chief Minister, Karachi, Pakistan
Faxes: 92 21 9202000
Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 August 1997.