

URGENT ACTION

IRAQI WOMEN FACING EXECUTION

At least nine women under sentence of death in Iraq are now in imminent danger of execution, as Iraq's Presidential Council has ratified their death sentences. Three other women have been executed since early June.

The authorities have transferred a number of women to the 5th section (*al-Shu'ba al-Khamisa*) of Baghdad's al-Kadhimiya Prison, which is where condemned prisoners are held immediately before they are executed. At least three women have been executed since early June. One of them, Qassima Hamid, from Baghdad, had been sentenced to death some time around the middle of 2006 after being convicted of murder and kidnapping.

One of the women now in imminent danger, Samar Sa'ad 'Abdullah, was sentenced to death in August 2005 for the murder of her uncle, his wife and one of their children. She blamed her fiancé, saying he had committed the killings in order to rob her uncle. It is not known whether her fiancé has been arrested. Samar Sa'ad 'Abdullah's death sentence was upheld by the Cassation Court in February 2007. At her trial, she alleged that after her arrest she had been held at a police station in Hay al-Khadhra in Baghdad and tortured by being beaten with a cable, beaten on the soles of her feet (*falaqa*) and subjected to electric shocks to make her "confess." The judge failed to order an investigation into her allegations, and sentenced her to death after two hearings.

Among the other women who have been transferred to the 5th section of al-Kadhimiya Prison are Shuruq Hassun, Sabrine Nasser, Samira 'Abdullah, Um Hussain ("Mother of Hussain" - real name not known), Hanan (full name not known), Dhikra Fakhry and Wassan Talib. Another woman, Lamya 'Adnan, is believed to have died in prison recently, for unknown reasons. Other women, in addition to these, are also under sentence of death in Iraq.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Expressing concern that at least three women have been executed since June, and that nine other women under sentence of death are now in imminent danger of execution;
- Urging the authorities to stop the executions of these women immediately, and commute their death sentences;
- Calling on the authorities to commute all death sentences and establish a moratorium on executions.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 SEPTEMBER 2009 via the Iraqi embassy or diplomatic representative in your country, asking them to forward your appeals to:

:

President

Jalal Talabai

Salutation: Your Excellency

Vice-President

Tariq al-Hashimi

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Prime Minister

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

Vice-President

'Adil 'Abdul Mahdi

Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the reintroduction of the death penalty by the Iraqi government in August 2004, about 1,000 people have been sentenced to death and scores have been executed. There are no official figures for the number of prisoners facing execution. All death sentences must be confirmed by the Cassation Court, after which they are referred to the Presidential Council, composed of the President and the two Vice-Presidents, for ratification and implementation. The President, Jalal Talabani, opposes the death penalty and delegates his ratification powers to the two Vice-Presidents. All prisoners whose death sentences have been ratified by the Presidential Council are transferred to the 5th section of al-Kadhimiya Prison in Baghdad before they are executed.

On 9 March 2009 the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council confirmed to Amnesty International that the Presidential Council had ratified the death sentences of 128 people, 12 of whom were executed on 3 May.

On 6 May 2009 the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq issued a statement expressing concern at the execution of the 12 people on 3 May and urging the Iraqi authorities to implement a moratorium on executions. Despite international pressure more executions have taken place since.

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