

EXTERNAL

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AMPUTATIONS IN SA'UDI ARABIA

Amnesty International has learned that four Filipino nationals had their right hands amputated on 2 March 1990. Their hands were amputated from the wrist in Al-Khubar in the Eastern Province of Sa'udi Arabia after they had been convicted of theft from a number of offices and companies in the towns of al-Dammam, al-Jubail, al-Khubar and Rahima. The names of the four are:

- . Carleto Torre Cambo
- . Dante Bala Nikfalour
- . Humir Ruki
- . Alfredo Siriyandi

Islamic law (Shari'a), as practised in Sa'udi Arabia, imposes amputation of the right hand as the punishment for repeated theft where there are no mitigating circumstances. The amputations were announced by the Ministry of the Interior after the sentences had been upheld on appeal and finally ratified by royal decree.

Amnesty International opposes amputation, considering it to constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment prohibited by a number of international human rights standards. These include the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Torture Convention and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Amputations are mostly carried out in public and an ambulance is generally present to transfer the amputee to hospital for aftercare. Amnesty International does not have details of the role played by doctors or the training given to those performing the amputations, but believes that some prior medical instruction may be given.

Any use of medical skill by physicians to assist in the infliction of any form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment runs contrary to international codes of medical ethics. The World Medical Association's Declaration of Tokyo, adopted in 1975, states:

Article 2:

"The doctor shall not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge to facilitate the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or to diminish the ability of the victim to resist such treatment."

Similarly, the United Nations' Principles of Medical Ethics adopted in 1982 state:

"it is a gross contravention of medical ethics as well as an offence under applicable international instruments, for health personnel, particularly physicians, to engage, actively or passively, in acts which constitute participation in, complicity in, incitement to or attempts to commit torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment". (Article 2)

Article 4(b) states that it contravenes medical ethics for doctors and other health professionals to:

"certify, or participate in the certification of prisoners or detainees for any form of treatment or punishment that may adversely affect their physical or mental health .. or to participate in any way in the infliction of such treatment or punishment..."

In the course of the year 1989 Amnesty International recorded 14 judicial amputations having been carried out in Sa'udi Arabia, eleven of which were performed on Yemeni nationals.

Amnesty International is calling for an end to the judicial punishment of amputation and for all those currently sentenced to amputation to have that sentence replaced by some other punishment which would not contravene international human rights standards.

INTERNAL

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To : Medical professionals

From: Medical Office / Research Department - Middle East

Date: 9 March 1990

**MEDICAL LETTER-WRITING ACTION**

**AMPUTATIONS CARRIED OUT IN SA'UDI ARABIA**

Appeals are requested from medical professionals following the carrying out of four sentences of amputation earlier this month. Letters should be written on professional headed paper, with or without mention of AI.

- . express concern at the amputations carried out on four Filipino nationals on 2 March, stating that you hold amputation to be a form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment which violates international standards of human rights
- . appeal for all sentences of amputation to be replaced by other punishments

Letters to the Minister of Health should seek information on the role played by doctors in judicial amputations, asking who performs the amputation, what type of prior instruction is given, whether the amputee is examined by a doctor, whether he is anaesthetized, whether a doctor is present at the amputation etc.

ADDRESSES

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines  
King Fahd bin 'Abd al-'Aziz  
Office of H.M. the Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines  
Riyadh Kingdom of Sa'udi Arabia

His Royal Highness  
Prince Sa'ud al-Faisal bin 'Abd al-'Aziz  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Jeddah  
Kingdom of Sa'udi Arabia

His Excellency  
Faisal bin 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Hejailan  
Minister of Health  
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