



Sarah Dematera

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 23/09/98

UA 220/98

Fear of imminent executions

14 August 1998

SAUDI ARABIA

Sarah Dematera (f)	} Filipino nationals
Mario Cruzado	}
Ramiro Esmer	}

**Anis (f), aged 38, and 13 other Pakistani nationals,  
including nine women**

---

At least 17 people may be at risk of imminent execution.

Eight people, possibly more, were executed in Saudi Arabia in July 1998. This represents the biggest number of executions carried out in the country during a single month this year, bringing the total for 1998 to 20. Those executed in July include Ahmad Bin Atiq Bin Atiq al-Zahrani, a Saudi Arabian, and Yolando Isanan, a Filipino, who were executed on 27 and 22 July respectively. Both were found guilty on murder charges following trial proceedings which remain shrouded in secrecy.

Although precise numbers are impossible to obtain, dozens of people have reportedly either been sentenced to death or are being held on charges which carry the death penalty. This includes Sarah Dematera, a Filipino woman convicted of murdering her employer and sentenced to death in 1992 (see EXTRA 43/97, MDE 23/03/97, 25 March 1997). Mario Cruzado and Ramiro Esmero, also Filipino, are detained on murder charges.

Ten Pakistani women, including Anis, and four Pakistani men may also face the death penalty after they were arrested in 1997 and charged with drug trafficking. The last time information regarding this case was available was in July 1997, when the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Islamabad issued a press release saying that it was still under investigation.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Saudi Arabia retains the death penalty for a wide range of offences, including murder, rape and other sexual offences, apostasy (converting from Islam to another religion), drug smuggling and acts of sabotage. Death sentences are imposed after trials which fall short of internationally agreed standards. Trials are held behind closed doors. Defendants do not have the right to formal representation by a lawyer during their trials.

Confessions obtained under torture are accepted as evidence by the court. In some cases a confession may be the sole evidence on which a conviction is based. The appeal process is highly secretive and defendants are denied access to information concerning the progress of their cases. Defendants and their families are sometimes given no warning that the death penalty is to be carried out (see Amnesty International report *Behind Closed Doors: Unfair Trials in Saudi Arabia*, AI Index MDE 23/08/97, November 1997).

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express/airmail letters either in English, Arabic or your own language:**

- calling for clarification on the cases of Sarah Dematera, Mario Cruzado and Ramiro Esmero, as well as the 14 Pakistanis, including Anis, who could be facing execution, and urging that, if this is the case, their death sentences be commuted;
- expressing grave concern about the steady increase in the number of executions in Saudi Arabia and calling for this practice to come to an end;

- urging that international safeguards for defendants facing the death penalty be strictly observed;
- reminding the government of Saudi Arabia's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior

His Royal Highness, Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz

Minister of the Interior

Ministry of the Interior

PO Box 2833, Airport Road

Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Telegrams: Minister of the Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

**Telexes: 404416**

**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness

Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz

Nasseriya Street, Riyadh 11124

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Telegrams: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

**Telexes: 405000**

**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

Minister of Justice

His Excellency

Dr. 'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh

Ministry of Justice

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

**Telexes: 405 980 MINJUS SJ**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 October 1998.

***"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."***

*Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>