

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 140/99 (AMR 51/162/99, 7 October 1999) - Fear of torture/Fear of Death penalty

SAUDI ARABIAHani el-Sayegh

Hani el-Sayegh was handed over to the government of Saudi Arabia by the US authorities on 11 October 1999. He was arrested immediately on arrival, and his whereabouts are now unknown. Amnesty International is concerned that he is at risk of torture, and at risk of execution after an unfair trial.

The Saudi Arabian government intend to try Hani el-Sayegh for his alleged involvement in the bombing of a US military complex at al-Khobar in June 1996, which led to the deaths of 19 US servicemen. Such a crime carries the death penalty in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Minister of the Interior, Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz, reportedly stated that "Hani el-Sayegh was handed over to us on Monday, and we appreciate the favourable response to our request from the United States." He added that Hani el-Sayegh was now "in the hands of Saudi justice" and would be interrogated and tried.

The US government claimed that it had received assurances from the Saudi Arabian government that Hani el-Sayegh would not be tortured, but they did not give details.

Amnesty International's concern that Hani el-Sayegh may not receive a fair trial and may face execution is heightened by a statement made by the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the US, Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin 'Abdul-'Aziz, who was quoted by Agence France Pressed today as saying, "Hani el-Sayegh will not be questioned or tried in a different manner from that which is applied in Saudi Arabia." Trials in Saudi Arabia, which have been monitored over the years by Amnesty International and other human rights organizations, have fallen far short of international standards, particularly Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him." Trials, particularly of political suspects, are routinely held behind closed doors; defendants are denied legal representation and meaningful appeals against convictions, even in capital cases.

Amnesty International is planning to send a delegation to observe the trial of Hani el-Sayegh, and has informed the Saudi Arabian ambassador in London of its intentions.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Hani el-Sayegh may be at risk of torture in incommunicado detention;
- reminding the Saudi Arabian authorities of their obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment to protect Hani el-Sayegh from torture;
- demanding assurances that Hani el-Sayegh's right to a fair and open trial will be respected and the trial will be open to international observers;

- seeking assurances that Hani el-Sayegh will be immediately given access to his family, lawyers of his choice and any medical attention he may need;
- seeking assurances that if convicted, Hani el-Sayegh will not be sentenced to death.

APPEALS TO:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines

His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul-'Aziz
Office of H.M. The King, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Salutation: Your Majesty

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: Interior Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Faxes: + 966 1403 1185 (this is a telephone and fax, please ask to be connected to the fax if a voice answers)

Telexes: 404416

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice

His Excellency, Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Telexes: 405 980 MINJUS SJ

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Information

His Excellency Dr. Fuad Abdul Salam Al-Farsi, Minister of Information, Ministry of Information, PO Box 843, Riyadh 11161, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telex: 401641 ARINFOR SJ

402640 MINMO SJ

Fax: + 966 1 402 3570/405 0674

Salutation: Your Excellency

Ambassador to the United Kingdom

His Excellency Dr Ghazi al-Gosaibi
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
30 Charles Street, London W1X 7PM

Fax: + 44 171 917 3255

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 10 November 1999.