

UA 159/00

Increase**SAUDI ARABIA**

Sa'ad Bin Fatis Bin 'Abdullah al-Zahrani, Saudi Arabian national
(executed)

Wahab 'Abdullah Tawtaeel, Indian national (executed)

'Omar Bin Mohammad Bin Shami, Yemeni national (amputation)

Siraj al-Islam Amjad, Bangladeshi national (amputation)

Executions in Saudi Arabia are continuing at an alarming rate. The four people named above were executed or had limbs amputated between 6 and 12 June. So far this year Saudi Arabia has executed 53 people, 25 of them in the past month. It is impossible to know the names of all those on death row or how many face execution in the next few days and weeks.

Of those executed this year 19 were Saudi Arabian and 29 were foreign nationals, from Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Sudan, Eritrea, Yemen, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Egypt and Iraq. The nationality of four others is not known.

The number of reported amputations as punishment has also increased significantly this year. To date Amnesty International has recorded 23 amputations, seven of which have been cross amputations - amputation of the right hand and left foot. The organization recorded two amputations in the whole of 1999.

While Amnesty International does not know how many people are on death row or how many face amputation, the organization fears that there are many more people currently in Saudi Arabian prisons, whose names we do not know, who could lose their lives or limbs tomorrow, during the next week or at any time in the weeks and months to come. Most, if not all, will have been sentenced after grossly unfair trials in which even the most basic rights, such as the right to be defended by a lawyer and the right to an effective appeal, are denied. They may also have been convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress, torture or deception.

Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of all governments to bring to justice those guilty of recognizably criminal offences.

However, Amnesty International is fundamentally opposed to the death penalty as the ultimate violation of the right to life and considers the cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment of judicial amputation to be a form of torture. The organization is committed to defending all people against the violations of these fundamental and internationally recognized rights, in line with Articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences which, in addition to violent crimes, include offences with no lethal consequences such as sorcery and drug-related offences. Punishment by amputation is enforced in Saudi Arabia for offences mainly limited to cases of theft, for which the sentence is amputation of the right hand, and highway robbery, which is punished by cross amputation. Under international human rights standards the use of these punishments is contrary to the prohibition of torture and other cruel punishments.

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

- expressing dismay at the continuing use of the death penalty and amputations in Saudi Arabia, and calling for an immediate halt to these punishments, and for all such outstanding sentences to be commuted;
- urging that international standards for capital trials are strictly observed.

APPEALS TO (please note that Saudi fax numbers can be very unreliable):

King and Prime Minister

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines

His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Office of H.M. The King

Royal Court, 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

P.O. Box 2933

Airport Road

Riyadh 11134

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: + 966 1 403 1185

Telegram: Minister of Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Telexes: 404416

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Nasseriya Street

Riyadh 11124

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Fax: + 966 1 403 0159

Telexes: 405000

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Dr. 'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh

Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice

University Street

Riyadh 11137

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: + 966 1 401 1741

Telegram: Minister of Justice, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Telexes: 405 980 MINJUS SJ

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: 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 19 July 2000.