

URGENT ACTION

DEATH SENTENCE OF INDIAN MIGRANTS REVOKED

Seventeen Indian migrant workers who were sentenced to death in March 2010 for the murder of a Pakistani national in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have had their death sentences revoked on appeal. They are expected to be deported to India in the coming weeks.

On 12 September the Court of Appeal in Sharjah, UAE, revoked the death sentence of 17 Indians accused of murdering a Pakistani man and reduced the sentence to two years' imprisonment and the payment of *diyah*, or blood money. The 17 men have served more than two years in prison since they were arrested in 2009. Their lawyer told Amnesty International on 13 September that the men will remain in jail until they are deported to India. This is expected to take place in the coming weeks.

The revocation of the death sentence comes after the family of the victim reportedly dropped their request for capital punishment after accepting a payment of *diyah* worth about 3.4 million UAE dirhams, which is equivalent to approximately 925,700 US dollars. Following mediation by members of the local Indian community in the UAE, a representative of the victim's family received the money on 27 July in a court hearing and signed papers pardoning the men. The appeal verdict was announced on 12 September.

The 17 men were arrested in 2009 and then sentenced to death in March 2010 for the killing of another man, following an unfair trial. Following their arrest in 2009, some of the 17 men were said to have been tortured and the original trial proceedings did not follow international standards. On 20 April 2010, following a visit to the UAE, lawyers from the Indian NGO Lawyers for Human Rights International (LFHRI) said in a press release that police had tortured the 17 men in custody over nine days, beating them with clubs, subjecting them to electric shocks, depriving them of sleep and forcing them to stand on one leg "for prolonged periods" as guards sought to force them to "confess." Under international standards, the 17 should have had access to legal counsel of their choice: they were provided with an Emirati lawyer, who could not speak their native language, Punjabi, and their torture was not mentioned in the court proceedings. Trial proceedings were translated from Arabic into Hindi, which the 17 men do not understand.

No further action is required. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.

This is the first update on UA 91/10. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE25/001/2010/en

Gender m/f: all m

Further information on UA: 91/10 Index: MDE 25/004/2010 Issue Date: 13 September 2011

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**

