

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

AI Index: MDE 23/001/2006 (Public)  
News Service No: 028  
31 January 2006

### **Saudi Arabia: Government must take urgent action to abolish the death penalty for child offenders**

Amnesty International welcomes the assurance given by the Saudi Arabian government to a United Nations child's rights Committee last week that it has not carried out any executions of child offenders since UN Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force in Saudi Arabia in 1996. This information was provided to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child when Saudi Arabian government representatives appeared before the Committee on 24 January 2005 when the Committee reviewed Saudi Arabia's second periodic report on its implementation of the Convention.

AI remains concerned, however, that child offenders – persons under 18 years of age at the time of their offence – continue to be sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia and is urging the government to take action urgently to cease this practice and make clear, once and for all, that adequate safeguards exist to ensure that child offenders are never again subject to the death penalty.

In its Concluding Observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child echoed this demand\*, stating formally that Saudi Arabia must “take immediate steps to halt and abolish” the imposition of the death penalty on persons convicted of crimes committed while under the age of 18, as required by article 37 of the Convention. The Saudi Arabian government representatives assured the Committee that the law in this regard is currently being reviewed by the authorities in Riyadh.

\*The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the body of independent experts established to monitor states' compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.