

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 109/92

Death Penalty

22 December 1992

SAUDI ARABIA:

Oswaldo Magdangal

Renato Posedio

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at reports carried by international news agencies that Oswaldo Magdangal and Renato Posedio are to be beheaded on 25 December 1992. Both men were arrested, reportedly because of their active role in the Christian community in Saudi Arabia. Amnesty International is not aware of the official charges brought against them, however there have been allegations that the two men were charged with blasphemy.

Oswaldo Magdangal, a Filipino citizen, was an active member in the Pentecostal assembly in Mursallat, Riyadh and lay pastor for the group since 1988. (The group is composed of expatriate Christians who meet in private villas to worship.) In January 1991 the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (CPVPV) entered the villa where the group was holding a meeting and arrested at least five of the members. Books and religious artifacts were also confiscated. After this incident Oswaldo Magdangal went into hiding. On 15 October 1992 members of the CPVPV arrested him from his home in Riyadh and confiscated Christian literature in his possession. According to reports, among the literature was a "prophecy" warning of hard times for Islam. Oswaldo Magdangal was taken to Malaz Prison in Riyadh where he is currently believed to be held. Amnesty International is not aware of the trial procedures followed in his case. On 19 November 1992 Amnesty International wrote to the Saudi Arabian government about the case of Oswaldo Magdangal, considering him a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of his religious beliefs, but has received no response.

Amnesty International has no further information about Renato Posedio.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia does not permit the open practice of religions other than Islam and proselytizing is forbidden. During 1991 and 1992 Amnesty International received reports of the arrest of at least 316 Christian worshippers, including women and children, for the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes either in English, Arabic

or in your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that Oswaldo Magdangal and Renato Posedio are scheduled to be executed on 25 December 1992;
- urging the commutation of their death sentences;
- seeking details of trial and appeals procedures followed in the cases of both Oswaldo Magdangal and Renato Posedio.

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APPEALS TO

1) His Royal Highness
Prince Naif bin 'Abd al-'Aziz
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Minister Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 404416 DMMOI SJ (Riyadh)
603788 AMN SJ (Jeddah)

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

2) His Royal Highness
Prince Salman bin 'Abd al-'Aziz
Governor of Riyadh Province
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Governor Riyadh Province, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 404 600 EMERA SJ

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

3) His Excellency
Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim Jubair
Minister of Justice
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 404450 Justic SJ, 403970 MINJUS SJ
403980 MINJUS SJ

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: and 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 1 January 1993.