

SAUDI ARABIA

Amnesty International is deeply alarmed at the dramatic increase in executions in Saudi Arabia. Ninety people have been executed so far this year, more than three times as many as were put to death in the whole of 1998. Seven people have been executed in the last 10 days.

Fifty-eight of those executed so far this year have been foreign nationals, including twelve Pakistanis, 10 Nigerians (three of them women), nine Afghans and six Indians. The others were Indonesian, Thai, Syrian, Jordanian, Ethiopian, Chadian and Yemeni. In 1998 six foreign nationals were executed.

An official account of how many people are on death row, or when they are due to be executed, is not available. However, Amnesty International is gravely concerned that 59 people are reportedly facing charges that carry the death penalty. Amnesty International has sought clarification and further details about these people from the Saudi Arabian government. The organisation fears the true figure may be much higher.

Saudi Arabia imposes the death penalty for drug trafficking, murder, rape, armed robbery and apostasy (turning away from Islam). Capital trials do not comply with internationally recognised standards, including the 1984 United Nations Safeguards guaranteeing the protection of those facing the death penalty and Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Defendants do not have the right to formal representation by defence lawyers; foreign nationals reportedly are not always provided with adequate interpretation facilities and access to consular assistance; and confessions can be used as the sole basis for convictions. Even confessions obtained under torture are sometimes used, despite Saudi Arabia's accession to the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Punishment in September 1997.

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

- expressing dismay at the increased use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia;
- expressing concern that executions are carried out after trials that fall short of international standards, and urging the authorities to follow international standards for capital trials;
- calling for an immediate halt to all executions and the commutation of all outstanding death sentences.

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

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 8 November 1999.