

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 62/02

Imm.

SAUDI ARABIA Male (name unknown), aged 17, Nigerian national

Amnesty International is concerned that a 17-year-old Nigerian national is reportedly at risk of imminent flogging. He is said to have been sentenced to 240 lashes in addition to six months' imprisonment for bestiality by a summary court in Tabuk, northern Saudi Arabia. The 240 lashes are planned to be administered in six installments of 40 lashes every seven days.

Amnesty International currently has no details about the defendant's trial, or when the flogging will be carried out.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Flogging is mandatory in Saudi Arabia for a number of offences, including sexual offences, and can also be used at the discretion of judges as an alternative or addition to other punishments. Sentences can range from dozens to thousands of lashes.

In January 2001, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that it was "disturbed that persons who committed crimes while under 18 may be sentenced to a variety of methods of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment such as flogging, stoning, and amputation, which are systematically imposed by judicial authorities. The Committee finds that application of such measures is incompatible with the Convention [on the Rights of the Child]".

In 1997 the United Nations commission on human rights stated that "corporal punishment [such as flogging] can amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, or even to torture". As a state party to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), Saudi Arabia is in violation of the international standard by carrying out the punishment of flogging.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that a teenager of Nigerian nationality is due to be flogged, and calling for the sentence not to be carried out;
- expressing concern that such a severe and inhumane punishment is due to be administered to someone under the age of 18, contrary to the findings of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- asking to know the precise charges against him, together with details of his trial proceedings and the evidence produced against him;
- asking whether he has been allowed a defence lawyer of his own choosing, and whether he is allowed to appeal against his sentence;
- seeking assurances that he will be provided with access to family, legal and consular access in detention, as well as regular medical attention as and when it is necessary;
- stating that you consider the use of flogging to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and is in violation of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

APPEALS TO:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
His Majesty King Fahd bin 'Abdul 'Aziz

Office of H.M. The King, Royal Court, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: King Fahd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Telexes: 201039 CABINET SJ
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 2933, Airport Road, Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Faxes: + 966 1 403 1185
Telexes: 401622 MORS SJ or 202811 INFORM SJ
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness, Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street, Riyadh 11124
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Faxes: + 966 1 403 0159
Telexes: 405000 MFA SJ
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
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Faxes: + 966 1 401 1741
Telexes: 404450 JUSTIC SJ
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of Saudi Arabia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.