

URGENT ACTION

TWO YOUNG MEN AT IMMINENT RISK OF EXECUTION

Abdullah al-Derazi and Jalal Labbad are at risk of imminent execution after Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court secretly upheld their death sentences in secret, without notifying their families or lawyers. Both young men were under the age of 18 at the time of their alleged crimes and were sentenced for crimes related to their participation in anti-government protests after grossly unfair trials that primarily relied on torture-tainted confessions. The young men have exhausted all domestic legal remedies and could now be put to death at any moment if King Salman ratifies their death sentences.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud

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Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,

I am deeply distressed that two young men, **Abdullah al-Derazi** and **Jalal Labbad**, are at imminent risk of execution and will be put to death should you ratify their death sentences. Both young men were under the age of 18 at the time of their alleged crimes.

Amnesty International recently learned that Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court secretly upheld the death sentences of Abdullah al-Derazi and Jalal Labbad after the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) convicted them of terrorism-related charges over their participation in protests against the government's treatment of the Shi'a minority in the country. Both men were sentenced in grossly unfair trials that lacked procedural safeguards. They had no access to legal representation during their pre-trial detention and told the court that they were tortured to "confess". The court did not investigate their claims of torture and other ill-treatment.

By sentencing the two men to death, Saudi authorities have reneged on their own promises to end the use of the death penalty for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age.

I urge you not to ratify the death sentences of Abdullah al-Derazi and Jalal Labbad, and to call on the competent authorities to quash their convictions and order a fair retrial without recourse to the death penalty. Furthermore, I call on you to order a prompt, impartial, independent, and effective investigation into the defendants' claims of torture and ill-treatment recorded in court documents reviewed by Amnesty International, including severe beatings, sexual violence and electrocution. Saudi Arabia must immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty in Saudi Arabia.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has credible information that the Supreme Court secretly upheld the death sentences of Abdullah al-Derazi and Jalal Labbad without notifying their families or lawyers. In the absence of transparent information around judicial processes in Saudi Arabia, particularly in death penalty cases, families only find out about the fate of their loved ones through the media. On 16 October 2023, the UN special rapporteur on summary, extrajudicial or arbitrary executions expressed concern at the imminent execution of Abdullah Al-Derazi. The two young men could be put to death as soon as the King ratifies their death sentences.

The Saudi Human Rights Commission told Amnesty International in a May 2023 letter that ‘the application of the death penalty on juveniles for *ta’zir* crimes has been completely abolished’. *Ta’zir* crimes, which both young men have been convicted of, are crimes for which the death penalty is not mandated under Islamic law. The use of the death penalty against people who were under 18 years of age at the time of the crime they have been convicted of is strictly prohibited under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Saudi Arabia has ratified.

Abdullah al-Darazi was 17 at the time of the crime. He was arrested on 27 August 2014 and sentenced to death by the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) on 20 February 2018 for involvement in “riots in al-Qatif, and chanting slogans against the state and causing chaos”, “participating in a terrorist network ... which aims to disrupt internal security”, and “attacking security officials with Molotov cocktails”. He told the court that he was held in pretrial detention for three years and, during which he had no access to legal representation. According to his court documents, which Amnesty International has reviewed, he told the judge: “I demand an independent medical evaluation to prove the torture that I have been subjected to ... The records of the Dammam investigations unit hospital prove that I continue to be treated as a result of beatings on my ears during my interrogation”. The court failed to investigate his torture allegations, and instead on 8 August 2022, an appeals court upheld his death sentence.

Jalal Labbad was between 15 and 17 years old at the time of the crime. He was arrested on 23 February 2019 and sentenced to death by the SCC on 31 July 2022 for “participating in protests and riots, and rebelling against the public order, and participating in chanting and raising slogans that insult and incite against the rulers during funerals of individuals killed by security forces” and “Participating in a terrorist network that aims to corrupt the state through: kidnapping and murdering a judge; shooting at security officials ... and throwing Molotov cocktails at security officials”. According to court documents reviewed by Amnesty International, he told the court he was detained for almost three years in pretrial detention and subjected to physical and psychological torture including “nine and a half months in solitary confinement in a small and tight room”, “severe beating” and “electrocuting my entire body, and particularly my genitals”. He told the court that he had been repeatedly denied medical treatment. An appeals court upheld Labbad’s sentence on 4 October 2022.

Saudi Arabia is one of the world’s top executioners. Between January and October 2023, the Saudi authorities have already executed 112 people. In 2022, the kingdom executed 196 people, the highest number of annual executions that Amnesty International has recorded in the country in the last 30 years.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Arabic

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 13 March 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Abdullah al-Derazi (he/him); Jalal Labbad (he/him)