

URGENT ACTION

TWELVE MEN AT IMMINENT RISK OF EXECUTION

Twelve Saudi Arabian men are at imminent risk of execution after the Supreme Court ratified their death sentences. They are accused of spying for Iran and sentenced to death after a grossly unfair mass trial.

Salem al-Amri, Muhammad Attieh, Abbas al-Hassan, Muhammad al-Aashur, Taleb al-Harbi, Hussein al-Hamidi, Hussain al-Abbud, Taher al-Harbi, Ali al-Aashur, Yussuf al-Harbi, Ali al-Mahna' and Abdullah al-Khamiss have had their death sentences upheld by the Supreme Court in Riyadh. Due to the lack of information surrounding the judicial process in Saudi Arabia, the families were not informed about the decision. According to the family it was only when they visited the Specialised Criminal Court (SCC) on 12 December checking for updates that they were told that the sentence was upheld. The decision is believed to have taken place a few weeks before their visit. The death sentence is now final, meaning that all 12 men could be executed as soon as the King ratifies the sentences, a secretive process which could happen at any time.

The 12 men were part of a group of 15 men who were sentenced to death on 6 December 2016 after a mass unfair trial of 32 people arrested across Saudi Arabia in 2013 and 2014. While 12 men have had their sentences ratified by the Supreme Court, the sentences of the three other men have not yet been ratified and the cases were sent from the Supreme Court back to the SCC with further comments. The families have not been informed about the details of the comments. Fifteen others were sentenced to prison terms ranging from six months to 25 years and two were acquitted. The men were charged with a series of offences including "high treason" with some facing several other charges which are not recognisably criminal offences under international law such as "supporting protests" and "spreading the Shi'a faith". Some of the men told the SCC that they were threatened with solitary confinement and that they would be banned from having any contact with their families if they did not sign "confession" documents.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the Saudi Arabian authorities to halt the execution of the 12 men and quash their convictions, given the grave concerns about the fairness of the trial, and to retry them in line with international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty;
- Calling on them to order a prompt, impartial, independent, and effective investigation into the allegations of ill-treatment;
- Urging them to immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty in Saudi Arabia.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 MARCH 2018 TO:

King and Prime Minister
His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz
Al Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: (via Ministry of Interior)
+966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Twitter: @KingSalman

Salutation: Your Majesty
Minister of Interior
His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Aziz
bin Saud bin Naif
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 403 3125
Twitter: @MOISaudiArabia
Salutation: Your Highness

And copies to:
Human Rights Commission
Bandar Mohammed 'Abdullah al-Aiban
P.O. Box 58889, Riyadh 11515
King Fahd Road
Building No. 3, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 418 510

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf bin Abdul Aziz - Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in London, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 30 Charles Street, Mayfair, London, W1J 5DZ tel: 020 7917 3000 or 02079173288, fax 02079173113 email: ukemb@mofa.gov.sa webform:

<http://embassies.mofa.gov.sa/sites/uk/EN/ContactDiplomaticMission/Pages/ContactWithDiplomaticMission.aspx>; twitter: @SaudiEmbassyUK,
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 182/17. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/6786/2018/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 15 men sentenced to death on 6 December 2016, Salem al-Amri, Muhammad Attieh, Abbas al-Hassan, Muhammad al-Aashur, Taleb al-Harbi, Hussein al-Hamidi, Hussain al-Abbud, Taher al-Harbi, Ali al-Aashur, Yussuf al-Harbi, Ali al-Mahna', Ahmad al-Nasser, Abdullah al-Khamiss, Hussain al-Ibrahim and Abbas al-Ibad, have had their death sentences upheld by the Court of Appeal of the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC), a counter-terror tribunal, earlier last year. Similar to the current process, the families only learned that their relatives' sentences had been upheld when some of them checked with the SCC's Court of Appeal for updates on 23 July and were told by a court official that the case had been sent to the Supreme Court for review on 20 July. While 12 men have had their sentences ratified by the Supreme Court, the sentences of the three other men have not been ratified and the cases were sent from the Supreme Court back to the SCC with further comments.

According to the lawyer of most of the defendants, all 32 men arrested were detained without an arrest warrant and held incommunicado for almost three months, during which they were repeatedly interrogated without a lawyer.

In practice, the Supreme Court's role is to check the formalities of the procedures in lower courts and not to review case details per se unless they relate to misapplied regulations by lower court judges'. Based on previous practices, usually all these steps are taken without thoroughly informing the defendants, their lawyers and their families. The Saudi Arabian authorities, routinely fail to inform families of the imminent execution of a family member, and they also do not directly inform them of executions after they have been carried out.

Since 2013, Amnesty International has recorded a spike in the use of death sentences against political dissidents in Saudi Arabia, including the Shi'a Muslim minority. Amnesty International has documented other the cases of at least 18 other Shi'a men currently sentenced to death. All were accused of activities deemed a risk to national security and handed death sentences by the SCC. Fourteen of them, who remain on death row and are at imminent risk of execution, after the Supreme Court upheld their death sentences in July 2017. They were convicted of a series of offences including among other things, taking part in violent protests in the Eastern Provinces in 2012, and were eventually sentenced to death by the SCC after a mass unfair trial which relied on confessions extracted through torture.

Amongst those on death row and awaiting execution, there are also four Saudi Arabian men who were arrested for offences committed when they were under 18. Those four men include Ali al-Nimr, Abdullah al-Zaher, Dawood al-Marhoon and Abdulkareem al-Hawaj. These men have said that they were tortured to make them "confess". One of these three is Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr's nephew. See Amnesty International's Urgent Action: Death penalty for juvenile activist, 3 June 2014: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/014/2014/en/> and Juvenile offenders risk execution, 15 October 2015: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/2671/2015/en/>.

The death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty at all times, regardless of who is accused, the crime, their guilt or innocence or the method of execution. Saudi Arabia is one of the top executioners in the world, with more than 2,000 people executed between 1985 and 2016.

Name: Salem al-Amri, Muhammad Attieh, Abbas al-Hassan, Muhammad al-Aashur, Taleb al-Harbi, Hussein al-Hamidi, Hussain al-Abboud, Taher al-Harbi, Ali al-Aashur, Yussuf al-Harbi, Ali al-Mahna', Abdullah al-Khamiss.

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 182/17 Index: MDE 23/7894/2018 Issue Date: 15 February 2018