

MDE 23/024/2014
22 September 2014

Further information on UA 201/14 SAUDI ARABIA - HAJRAS AL-QUREY EXECUTED

SAUDI ARABIA

Hajras al-Qurey was executed on 22 September for drug-trafficking, despite maintaining that he was tortured into “confessing” to the crime and the fact that he was convicted after an unfair trial.

Hajras bin Saleh bin Muhammad al-Qurey was executed on the morning of 22 September. His family have received his body from the hospital in the south-eastern city of Najran.

Hajras al-Qurey was sentenced to death on 16 January 2013 by the General Court in Najran. The sentence was later upheld by both an appeal court and the Supreme Court.

Hajras al-Qurey and his son Muhammad al-Qurey were arrested on 7 January 2012 at the al-Khadra crossing with Yemen, when customs officers suspected them of carrying drugs in their car. According to the court documents, Hajras al-Qurey tried to drive away at speed to escape from the border police, who gave chase and caught them. According to his family, Hajras al-Qurey suffered from psychological problems and had been known to lose control of himself when under pressure.

Both men were then taken for interrogation and claimed they were tortured to extract “confessions”. Muhammad al-Qurey “confessed” to the crime and testified that his father had not known that he, Muhammad, was smuggling drugs. Both men were denied access to lawyers during interrogation. The General Court in Najran ignored evidence from an assessment it had commissioned that found Hajras al-Qurey had a mental condition that might have impaired his judgment.

No investigations are known to have been carried out into either man’s allegations that they were tortured and received an unfair trial.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the third update of UA 201/14. Further information:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE23/021/2014/en>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

So far in 2014, the Saudi Arabian authorities have executed at least 59 people, including 42 between 4 August and 22 September alone. On 18 August, four members of one family were executed in the south-eastern city of Najran for “receiving large quantities of hashish”. The four men had been sentenced to death on the basis of “confessions” reportedly extracted under torture. In 2013, Saudi Arabia executed at least 79 people, three of whom were juveniles at the time of the crime for which they were put to death, in clear violation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Saudi Arabia is one of the top executioners in the world, with more than 2,000 people executed between 1985 and 2013.

Court proceedings in Saudi Arabia fall far short of international standards for fair trial. Trials in capital cases are often held in secret. Defendants are rarely allowed formal representation by lawyers, and in many cases are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. They may be convicted solely on the basis of “confessions” obtained under duress or deception. Foreign nationals with no knowledge of Arabic – the language of pre-trial interrogation and trial hearings – are often denied adequate interpretation facilities. In some cases condemned prisoners’ families are not notified in advance of their execution.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences that are not accepted as “most serious crimes” under international standards for applying the death penalty, as this is limited to crimes involving intentional killing. These include “adultery”, armed robbery, “apostasy”, drug-related offences, rape, “witchcraft” and “sorcery”. Some of these offences, such as “adultery” and “apostasy”, should not even be criminalized at all. At least one person has been executed for “witchcraft” and “sorcery” in 2014.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Name: Hajras bin Saleh bin Muhammad al-Qurey Gender m/f: m

