

PUBLIC

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Fear of imminent execution

SAUDI ARABIA

Safun Muhammed Ali Ahmed al-Zahifi (m), 24, Yemeni national

Safun Muhammed Ali Ahmed al-Zahifi is at risk of imminent execution. The death sentence against him is said to have been referred to the King for ratification or pardon, which is the final appeal stage of the judicial system. The King may grant clemency, but if he chooses to ratify the sentence, Safun Muhammed Ali Ahmed al-Zahifi could be executed at any time.

Safun Muhammed Ali Ahmed al-Zahifi was reportedly arrested on 25 April 2006 and allegedly confessed under duress to the abduction and rape of a boy. He was sentenced to death on 11 July 2006 and the sentence was upheld on appeal. He is held at the General Prison in al-Jawf in the north of Saudi Arabia.

Fear of Safun Muhammed Ali Ahmed al-Zahifi's execution is compounded by a sharp increase in executions in recent weeks. At least 22 people have been executed during the last eight weeks, bringing the total number of people executed so far this year to 39. The majority of those executed were foreign nationals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences. Court proceedings fall far short of international standards for fair trial and take place behind closed doors. Defendants are rarely allowed formal representation by a lawyer, 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, torture or deception.

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

- expressing concern that Safun Muhammed Ali Ahmed al-Zahifi is at risk of imminent execution and calling on the King to commute the death sentence against him immediately;
- seeking assurances that he is protected from torture and ill-treatment, and that he is given regular access to his lawyer, consular assistance, his family and medical treatment, if necessary.

APPEALS TO:

King Abdullah 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
Salutation: Your Majesty

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
P.O. Box 2933
Airport Road
Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: + 966 1 403 1185 / 403 3614
Salutation: Your Royal Highness

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street
Riyadh 11124
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: + 966 1 403 0645

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

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 3 February 2007.