

PUBLIC

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UA 32/09 Fear of imminent execution

IRAQ Seven people, names not known

According to the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council's website, seven people under sentence of death had their sentences upheld by the Cassation Court on 8 February. This means their cases will be referred to Iraq's Presidential Council for ratification, after which they will be executed.

The website gives no details about the seven, beyond the fact that they were sentenced to death for murder and kidnapping under Iraq's Penal Code and the Anti-Terrorism law, by courts in Bagdad and other cities and provinces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty was suspended in 2003 while Iraq was under occupation by a US-led coalition. However, since its reintroduction by the Iraqi government in August 2004, hundreds of people have been sentenced to death and scores have been executed. At least 65 people were put to death in 2006 alone, many of them after unfair trials. In 2007 at least 199 people were sentenced to death and 33 were executed, and in 2008 at least 285 people were sentenced to death and at least 34 executed. The totals could be much higher as there are no official figures for the number of prisoners facing execution, and the Iraqi press's reporting of death sentences is erratic at best. The Presidential Council, which ratifies death sentences, is composed of the President and the two Vice-Presidents.

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

- expressing concerns at reports that the Cassation Court has upheld the death sentences imposed on seven people;
- urging the authorities to commute these and all other death sentences;
- calling on them to establish a moratorium on executions.

APPEALS TO:

Please send appeals via the Iraqi embassy or diplomatic representative in your country, asking them to forward your appeals to:

President

Jalal Talabani

Salutation: Your Excellency

Vice-President

Tariq al-Hashimi

Salutation: Your Excellency

Vice-President

'Adil 'Abdul Mahdi

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Prime Minister

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hoshyar Zebari

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights

Wajdan Mikhail Salam

Fax: +9641 538 2007

Salutation: Your Excellency

and to diplomatic representatives of Iraq accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 March 2009.