

PUBLIC

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Death penalty/fear of imminent execution

IRAQ

18 people, names not known

The Federal Cassation Court in Baghdad ratified the death sentences of 18 people on 18 June. They can now appeal to the president for clemency, but could be executed at any time, possibly within days.

Two of the 18 were sentenced to death by the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI) in Baghdad for kidnapping; five by the CCCI in Mosul for kidnapping; three by an ordinary criminal court in Dhi Qar, for various crimes; and two, also by an ordinary criminal court, in Basra for murder.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the reintroduction of the death penalty in Iraq 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. So far this year at least 33 people have been sentenced to death and 30 executed. The totals could be much higher as the Iraqi press's reporting on death sentences is erratic at best.

Amnesty International has expressed serious concerns about proceedings before the CCCI, which consistently fall short of international standards. Defendants often complain that "confessions" have been extracted from them under torture and that they could not choose their own legal counsel.

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

- expressing concern that 18 people had their death sentences ratified on 18 June, and are now facing execution;
- calling on the authorities to commute these people's death sentences immediately;
- recognizing the right of governments to bring to justice those responsible for grave crimes such as kidnapping and murder but insisting that the death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment;
- calling on the authorities to introduce an immediate moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty completely.

APPEALS TO:

If no email address is given, or your email bounces, 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

Prime Minister

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights

Wajdan Mikhail Salam

Fax: +9641 538 2007

Email: Wj_mohr_min@yahoo.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hoshyar Zebari

E-mail: press@iraqmofa.net

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iraq accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.