

PUBLIC

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UA 185/08 Death penalty

KUWAIT **Sheikh Talal bin Nasser al-Sabah (m)**

Sheikh Talal bin Nasser al-Sabah, a member of Kuwait's ruling Al-Sabah family, was sentenced to death in December 2007 on drug-trafficking charges. His sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court on 24 June and will now be submitted for ratification to the head of state, the Amir, who has also the power to commute the sentence. Sheikh Talal bin Nasser al-Sabah could be executed within a month.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is the first time anyone from Kuwait's royal family has been sentenced to death. Kuwait applies the death penalty for a range of offences, including offences with no lethal consequences. At least one person was executed in 2007, a Pakistani man convicted of drug-smuggling. Executions are usually by hanging. Kuwait is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of which article 6(2) states: "In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court."

Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but opposes the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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

- urging the Amir not to ratify the death sentence imposed on Sheikh Talal bin Nasser al-Sabah;
- acknowledging that governments have the right and responsibility to bring those who commit violent crimes to justice, but expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment;
- calling on the authorities to commute all outstanding death sentences in Kuwait;
- reminding the authorities of the growing international trend towards abolition of the death penalty, powerfully expressed in the UN General Assembly's 18 December 2007 resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions.

APPEALS TO:Head of state

His Highness Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al- Sabah
Amir of the State of Kuwait
al-Diwan al-Amiri, al-Safat, Kuwait

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Email: amirsoffice@da.gov.kw

Salutation: Your Highness

Prime Minister

His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah
Prime Minister
Council of Ministers General Secretariat

P .O. Box 1397, al-Safat 13014, Kuwait

Fax: +965 246 6334

Salutation: Your Highness

Minister of the Interior

His Excellency Jaber Khalid Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
Ministry of the Interior

P.O.Box 12500, Shamiya 71655, Kuwait

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Email: comment@moi.gov.kw

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

His Excellency Jamal Ahmad Al-Shihab
Ministry of Justice

P.O.Box 6, al-Safat 1300, Kuwait

Fax: +965 243 5220

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:Chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee

Saleh al-Fadhallah

Chairperson, Parliamentary Human Rights Committee National Assembly

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and to diplomatic representatives of Kuwait accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 August 2008.