



To: Health Professional Network
From: Health and Human Rights Team
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Health Professional Action

Egypt: two doctors sentenced to flogging in Saudi Arabia – pardoned

(Further information on MDE 23/050/2008, 8 December 2008)

Two Egyptian doctors, Raouf Amin al-Arabi and Shawqi Abd Rabbuh, who were sentenced to prison and lashes in Saudi Arabia, returned to Egypt on 24 December 2009 after being pardoned by Saudi Arabia's head of state, King 'Abdullah bin 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Saud. The royal amnesty came after a meeting between King 'Abdullah and President Hosni Mubarak in Riyadh on 22 December 2009.

Raouf Amin al-Arabi and Shawqi Abd Rabbuh were sentenced in Saudi Arabia to, respectively, 15 and 20 years in prison, and 1,500 and 1,700 lashes. They were both subjected to one session of flogging and were each given 70 lashes. While Amnesty International does not have information on the exact formulation of the charges on which they were convicted, the doctors were alleged to have illegally sold pharmaceuticals and facilitated the addiction of an unnamed Saudi Arabian patient to morphine after prescribing the medicine for her pain relief following an accident.

The sentences were handed down to Raouf Amin al-Arabi, aged 52, and Shawqi Abd Rabbuh, aged 49, by a court in Jeddah in November 2007. However, very little information was made public about their case, and they were believed to have been convicted and sentenced following an unfair trial.

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