

PUBLIC

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Death by stoning/ flogging

13 June 2006

**UNITED
ARAB
EMIRATES (UAE)**

**Shahin 'Abdul Rahman (m)
Asma Bikham Bijam (f)**

A foreign national in the Emirate of Fujairah has been sentenced to death by stoning by a Shari'a (Islamic) court. Shahin 'Abdul Rahman, whose nationality is not known to Amnesty International, received the sentence on 10 June 2006 for committing adultery after he was allegedly found naked in bed with Asma Bikham Bijam, a domestic worker.

Asma Bikham Bijam's employer had reportedly called the police when he realised that she was in bed with Shahin 'Abdul Rahman in his house in April 2005. Shahin 'Abdul Rahman who is a married man, reportedly admitted to having a sexual relationship outside wedlock with Asma Bikham Bijam. She was sentenced to receive 100 lashes in addition to a one-year prison term.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International opposes laws that criminalise adult consensual sexual relations in private. Treating adultery and fornication as criminal offences is not consistent with international human rights standards. The UN Human Rights Committee has stated explicitly that "it is undisputed that adult consensual sexual activity in private is covered by the concept of "privacy". Furthermore, criminalising these "offences" affects women more than men.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty and judicial punishments that amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, regardless of the crime for which they are imposed, or the nature of the legal code that sanctions such punishments. Some Emirates in the UAE apply Shari'a law by passing sentences of death by stoning and flogging. All death sentences in the UAE automatically go to appeal.

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

- expressing concern that Shahin 'Abdul Rahman has been sentenced to death by stoning and Asma Bikham Bijam has been sentenced to 100 lashes;
- stating that Amnesty International considers the punishment of flogging to constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment amounting to torture;
- urging for the sentences of death by stoning and flogging to be commuted.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

His Excellency
Major-General Shaikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Ministry of the Interior
PO Box 398
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
Fax: + 971 2 4414938
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice, Awqaf & Islamic Affairs

His Excellency

Muhammad bin Nakhira Al-Dhahiri
Ministry of Justice, Awqaf & Islamic Affairs
PO Box 753
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
Fax: + 971 2 681 0680
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs
His Excellency
Shaikh 'Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 1,
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
Fax: + 971 4 228 0979
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of United Arab Emirates accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 July 2006.