

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 25/10/97

EXTRA 121/97 Fear of imminent crucifixion
and execution

8 September 1997

ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Majid Fakher Hussein Majeed
Abdul Mehdi Karim Mushtaq

Majid Fakher Hussein Majeed, a United Arab Emirates national, and Abdul Mehdi Karim Mushtaq, an Iranian national, are reported to be facing imminent execution after crucifixion.

The two men were reportedly sentenced to death earlier this year, for the murder of five people in a series of robberies. Their sentence is said to have been ratified by al-Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates.

A Justice Ministry statement on 7 September 1997 reportedly stated that the two men were going to be sentenced to be crucified alive in public on 8 September and then executed on the morning of 9 September in the town of al-Ain. However, media reports on 8 September suggested that the crucifixion has been postponed, but may take place one day before the execution which may take place on 12 September.

Amnesty International recognises the rights and responsibilities of governments to bring to justice those suspected of violent criminal offenses, as in this case, but is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate violation of the right not to be subject to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. In Amnesty International's view, the crucifixion of a prisoner exacerbates the degrading nature of the death penalty, by causing additional suffering for the prisoners, as well as their families.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the reported imminent crucifixion and execution of the two prisoners, and urging commutation of both sentences;
- acknowledging the government's right and responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of violent criminal offenses, but explaining your unconditional opposition to the death penalty as the most extreme form of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and a violation of the right to life, irrespective of the crime for which it was imposed.

APPEALS TO:

His Highness
al-Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates
Ruler of Abu Dhabi
Manhal Palace
PO Box 280, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Telexes: 22220 PALACE EM
Telegrams: President Al-Nahyan, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Faxes: +971 266 4799
Salutation: Your Highness

COPIES TO:

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His Excellency
Dr Abdulla bin Omran Taryam
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 753
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Faxes: +9712 664 944

His Excellency
General Dr Mohd Saeed al-Badi
Minister of Interior
PO Box 398
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Faxes: +9712 461 621; 415 688

and to diplomatic representatives of UAE accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 October 1997.