

URGENT ACTION

THREE MEN FACING EXECUTION IN YEMEN

Three men have had their death sentences confirmed by Yemen's Supreme Court in recent days. If the Court's verdict is ratified by the President, they will be at imminent risk of execution.

The three men, Shaikh Khalid Nahshal, Mabkhout 'Ali Nahshal and Abduh Muhammad Nahshal, were among 32 people charged in connection with the killing of at least one government official in the district of Khayran in northern Yemen in September 2006. This happened following a dispute over the local and presidential elections and an exchange of fire between a group of armed men and the government official in charge of Khayran. In 2007 six of the defendants were sentenced to death, but three had their sentences commuted to prison terms in June 2009, following an appeal. The remaining 26 received prison sentences.

The three at risk of execution are reported to be leading members of Islah, an opposition party. Their lawyers have complained that their trials failed to meet international standards. Specifically, they complained that they were not given full and effective opportunity to challenge the evidence against the three men, and that court judges were threatened by relatives of the official who was killed. They also argued that their clients may have been targeted because they had supported a candidate who mounted an unsuccessful challenge against the incumbent President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, in presidential elections in 2006.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the President to commute the death sentences of Shaikh Khalid Nahshal, Mabkhout 'Ali Nahshal and Abduh Muhammad Nahshal;
- Acknowledging that the government has a right to bring to justice those responsible for criminal offences, but expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty;
- Reminding the authorities that they are bound by international standards for fair trial in capital cases, including the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence;
- Urging the President to commute all outstanding death sentences and establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 MARCH 2010 TO:

President

His Excellency General Ali Abdullah Saleh
Office of the President of the Republic of Yemen
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Fax: + 967 127 4147
Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

His Excellency 'Abdullah al-'Ulufi
Office of the Attorney General
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Fax: + 967 137 4412
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Human Rights

Her Excellency Houda 'Ali 'Abdullatif al-Baan
Ministry for Human Rights
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Fax: +967 1 444 838/
+967 1 419 555 / +967 1 419 700
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Yemen accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has long-standing concerns about the use of the death penalty in Yemen, particularly as death sentences are often passed after proceedings which fall short of international standards for fair trial.

Amnesty International acknowledges the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of recognizably criminal offences, but is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, and as a violation of the right to life.

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